

THE
DOUBTING
BELEEVER :
OR,
A TREATISE
CONTAINING

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| { 1. The Nature | { of Doub |
| { 2. The Kinds | { tings, in- |
| { 3. The Springs | { cident to |
| { 4. The Remedies | { weak Be- |
| | { leEVERS. |

BY

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Minister of
COVENT-GARDEN.

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TO THE

Right Honourable,

ROBERT

Earle of VVarwick,

Baron of Leeze, &c.

My Noble Lord, and free Patron.

My Lord:

Renewed heartlis

alvery Heaven in

our little World,

and Faith is the only Sun

in that Heaven: The Sin-

ner never comes to be

precious, till he comes to

be pious; and the value of

that piety still advanceth,

A 3 ac

The Epistle

according to the quantity of true faith, as the Ring is the more considerable with the Diamond. I cannot conceive of a more compendious way for any Christians full and constant revenues, then this, To get faith, and still to use it: The sum or product of which would be this, Grace and Glory, Heaven and Earth are ours. Satan well knowes what a serviceable channell Faith is for all our traffique, either for our ship to lanch out into du-

duties, or for Gods ship
to come laden in to us
with mercies : and there-
fore there is no Grace
which he batters, & con-
flicts so with, as with
faith : If wee weaken or
shake foundations, this
hath a spreading influ-
ence into the whole buil-
ding : A Christians faith
cannot be wronged, but
presently all the spirituall
frame becomes sensible
of wrong and losse.

In my weake judge-
ment, it were a great pru-
dence to secure that,
which being secured,

now secures all. Nothing grows weak where faith grows strong. My Lord, This poor Treatise which I presume to front with your name, is like *Aaron* and *Hur*, who staid up the hands of *Moses*; So doth this Treatise endeavour to stay the hands of faith in a weak Beleever, who hath an ample estate on the shore and at land; but those waves of doubtings (when he is thrusting in) too often make him to fall back & stagger: Whence follows this great unhappinesse, That where-

whereas his faith might
have served in many pre-
cious comforts, it is (al-
most a whole life) im-
ployed onely to answer
fears and doubts. I hum-
bly present the subse-
quent Worke to your
Lordships personall use,
and publique patronage.
Be pleased (at your lea-
sure) to peruse it, and re-
gard it as the first cogni-
zance of my thankfulness
to your Honour, for the
Living which you did so
freely & lovingly confer
upon me, wherein I shall
desire faithfully to serve:

The Epistle, &c.

your Lord and mine.

Now the Almighty
God, and blessed Father,
abundantly enrich your
noble heart with all sa-
ving graces, and continue
you long to be an instru-
ment of much glory to
himself, comfort to his
Church, and good to our
Common-wealth.

I am, Sir, your most humble

servant, and your most obliged

debtor.

I am, Sir, your most obliged

debtor.

I am, Sir, your most obliged

debtor.

I am, Sir, your most obliged

debtor.

I am, Sir, your most obliged

debtor.

To the Christian
READER.

THis Treatise
which now is
presented to a publike
construction, was (many
yeers past) the subject of
my private Meditati-
ons and Sermons. I did
not affect any farther
publication of it; then
in the Pulpit; but the
importunity of others
hath compelled it thus
to appear in Print.

Note

Not that the manner
of handling the Sub-
ject (here insisted on)
is excellent or exquisite,
but that the matter
handled may be suppo-
sed to be of common use
& benefit, as a little star
bath influence, though
not that glory which is
proper to the Sun.

The case which is
here put & discussed, is
a case of common expe-
rience; there is no belee-
ver, but sometime or o-
ther

ther will confess it is
his. The Sun being sea-
ted in an heavenly orb,
shineth with a very
pure & constant light,
but the candle (though
set, & burning in a gol-
den candlestick, yet)
burns with a snuffe, &
much variablenesse.
When Christians are
translated, and trans-
planted from earth to
heaven. then their gra-
ces shall become perfe-
ctions; there are no de-
fects

fects in heaven, there
are no mixtures in hea-
ven, but whatsoever is
pure there, it is altoge-
ther pure: yet on earth
it is otherwise, neither
the habits of grace, nor
the acts of grace are a-
lone in any Christian:
When I would doe
good, evil is present
with me, said Paul;
And, I beleeve, Lord,
help my unbelief, said
that poor man in the
Gospel. Where is the
be-

beleever who insists not
more on his fears then
on his faith? and is not
oftner lamenting his
doubts, then rejoycing
in his assurances? none
have an interest in
Christ, but beleevers;
none have title to a
solid and settled peace,
but they; and yet we see
the children fearful, &
bondmen confident; the
best of men still in suit,
& the worst of men qui-
et, as if in full possession;
none

none doubting less then
such as have most cause
to doubt, & none doub-
ting more then such
as have most cause to
triumph in Christ. And
in truth thus it wil be,
whiles gross ignorance
veils over presumptu-
ous sinners, and mis-
belief is incident to
tender spirits. *bliss ed*
ed And is not the hand
of Joab in this business
too? Is not Satan in all
the sins of wicked men,
snore and

and in most of the
troubles of good men?
either he tempts us to
sin, & that will cause us
to doubt; or else hee
tempts us to doubt, and
that wil cause us to sin.
Surely it is not the shor-
test of his wiles and
arts, in matters of
Religion, to keepe the
judgements of some still
staggering; and in mat-
ters of a souls interest
in Christ, to keep the
heart still doubting.
Doth

Doth he not know that the
Christian cannot so happily im-
prove Christ, who is still in suit
to prove his title to Christ?

For the better expediting
of these soul-suits, peruse (if
thou pleasest) this ensuing
Work, which is (I confess)
not a garden for every one to
walk in, but only physick for
the sick or weak. It is intended
as an Hospital for the lame,
only for a troubled sinner, only
for a weak believer: And the
Father of our Lord Jesus
Christ, the Father of mercies,
and the God of all comfort, e-
ven he who establisheth us in
Christ, prosper it for his glory
and the help of some one or o-
ther. Thy faiths servant,
OBADIAH SEDGWICK.

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What the ingredients of it are. 315

THE
TREATISE
OF
DOVBTINGS.

From Matth. 14. 31.

O thou of little faith, wherefore didst
thou doubt?

Hese words containe in
them the summe of a
Christian in this life,
which is this: That he is
truly, but yet weakly good. Christ
here seeth in Peter (though a
Disciple) a defective faith, and
then a defect of faith: Faith hee
saw in him, yet it was defective.
It was little faith: There was
truth, but there was not such ac-
tually strength in it, as might or
should be: And besides this, he e-
spyed in him a defect of faith; not

B

for

The doubting Christian

for the habit of it, but for the act of it, *Wherefore didst thou doubt?* Which words are a conviction that he did doubt, and likewise a correction; Wherefore, *wherefore didst thou doubt?* q. d. Thou didst doubt; but thou didst ill so to doubt.

There are many excellent points which might be observed from the Text, I will name some, and insist only on one of them; Thus then.

1 A true Believer may be but a weake Believer, [*Thou of little faith!*]

2 Christ takes notice even of a weake Believer, [*O thou of little faith!*]

3 Though Christ likes believing, yet he dislikes doubting, [*Wherefore didst thou doubt?*]

4 A person may be truly believing, who nevertheless is sometimes doubting: in the same person here you see a commendation of the one, and a condemnation of the other, which suppose

pose necessarily a presence of both.

This being the Subject on which I purpose to treat, for the benefit of weak Christians, I shal declare five things concerning it; Namely,

- 1 The nature of Doubtings.
- 2 The kinds and diversities of them.
- 3 Their possible consistence with true faith.
- 4 Their grounds, and springs, and occasions.
- 5 Their cures and remedies.

CAP. I.

The nature of Doubtings.

TO understand this, you must know, that in the worst part of the soul, there are severall qualities, viz. 1. Infidelity, which strictly, and amongst those which profess the Gospel, is a positive rejecting of heavenly truths, with

The doubting Christian

their secret goodnesse; herein men forsake their own mercies by plain dissent and slighings of the good word of grace: as is evident in the Pharisees, *Luk. 7. 30.* who rejected the counsel of God, &c.

2 Despaire, which is a manifest dissent, not so much in respect of the thing, or object, (for this is assented unto as true in respect of it selfe, viz. That God is mercifull, and Christ did dye for sinners) but in respect of the person

As *Jer. 2. 25.* There is no hope: no.

Esa. 38. 18. They that goe downe into the pit cannot hope for thy truth:

This holds not only in the pit of the grave, but also in the pit of despaire.

or subject, wherein the soule gives up it selfe as lost, as without the compasse and hopefulnesse of the Divine proclamation: It is perswaded that there is no possibility for it to recover the shore, and therefore sinks in the depths: My meaning is, that such a soule, though it sees that in God, and that in Christ which can save, and doth save others, yet cuts off it selfe, as not at all capable of any interest in the mercy of God, or blood of Christ, and so eternally falls under its owne weight,

Aug 2

as is evident in Judas and Caius

Now Despaire, so farre as it makes assent unto Truths, it is opposed unto Infidelity; and so farre as it dissenteth from speciall goodnesse in them, it is opposed to Faith; and so farre as it concludes impossibility of that good unto it selfe, it is opposed to Hope.

2. Fearfull Opinions, which are positive assents unto Truths, yet raised upon such probable inducements only, that the soule is left with a suspicion, that the contrary may be true. They are like a man upon a weak planke in a great river, there he sits, and there he feares, because he knows not certainly how long he shall sit there.

3. Doubtings, which are the suspensions, or inhibitions (the holdings up) of the soule from any determinate inclinations one way or other: they are the pawlings of the minde.

which

B 3

As

The doubting Christian.

Simile.

As take a man in a journey, where he meets with two wayes, he lookes on this, and inclineth it may be the right, and then he looks on that, and supposeth that it may be the right, and then he looks upon both, and makes a stand, and goes on in neither: So it is with the soule in doubtings (spiritually) there are two wayes before it, two objects, two works, to beleeve, or not to beleeve, and

* Dictated from the spirit, and from the flesh; from that, by way of perswasion; from this, by way of dissuasion.

* arguments to incline to the one, and to the other, drawing into some equality of strength and weight, just like a paire of scales, answerably ballanced, so that both are at a stand, there is no turning either to the right hand or to the left. Therefore the School-men say well, that *Dubitatio est motus super utramque partem contradietionis, cum formidine determinandi alteram partem ejus* 2. 2. 2. 10.

3. Things to be further observed.

That you may yet conceive this clearly, remember 1. In our mindes there are Assentings, which

which are the adherents of the understanding to truths knowne : And there are Dissentings, which are the bearings off from those truths. There the soule positively inclines, here it declines ; there it puts out the hand, and here it keeps it in.

2 Doubtings properly stand between them both ; they are not plainly the one, nor plainly the other : If I may speak freely, I conceive them to have a twang of either ; they are a *medium*, a middle thing, as your mixt colours are, which you cannot style directly white, or directly black.

The soule hath a desire to joyne unto Truth, it hath a desire to share in that goodnesse which it apprehends ; yet it neither falls in, nor yet rejects, but like the fish to the bait, it likes it, and is striking at it, but dares not, and swims about ; or like a trawle of the sea, (that is the Apostles comparison, *Jan. 1. 6*) thrusting

Doubtings are staggerings.

Rom. 4. 20

Simile.

to the shore, and yet drawing
back; or like a Meteor hovering
in the aire twixt up and downe.
Such rowling, reeling actions of
the soule are doubtings; they are
a recoyling, adventuring. The
soule sees reason of either side, to
draw and with-draw, to give on,
and give back. It sees Christ and
the promises, knows the goodness
and bounty in the one and the o-
ther, whereupon it is giving on
upon them, and putting out the
hand, but then instantly it checks
it selfe, and is stayed with contra-
ry arguments and feares. I may
not be so bold, perhaps they be-
long not unto me.

So that the person is hanging
betwixt hope and feare, I would
but I may not; I may, but I dare
not; It is just with the soule, as
with those at Chesse, they set out
a man, and think to take a King;
but then presently they are checke
ed, and draw him back againe;
God, he is my Lord, and my
King,

resolved.

King, pay and yet he is not; He will doe me good, yet I feare he will not; He hath pardoned my sins, and yet I feare he hath not; He doth heare my prayer, yet I doubt he doth not; My estate is good and happy, neverthelesse I suspect it is not.

Thus doth a man waver, and royle, and is like a man in the ungrounded places, he no sooner plucks up one leg out of the dirt, but the other sinks in; the soule is not determin'd one way or other.

Simile.

3 One thing know more, that though the mind doth not pitch, or rise unto a determinate action in spirituall doublings, yet it ever inclines towards a determinate object: That is, though the doubting Christian cannot come yet to quit those uncertaine, and trembling, and shivering motions, and bring them to a stayednesse, and positive fixing, yet his mind honours, it looks after Christ, and the promises; it doth not re-

Note.

The doubting Christian

ject, nor doth it give up all hopes; it keeps in it two things, which Infidelity and Despaire want.

2. Things. 1. One is, that it prizeth Christ, and the promises, though it cannot claspe them.

2. Another is, that it gives not up the case as desperate, and impossible; but though it cannot fixe, yet it will be hovering about them.

~~THE SECOND THING RESPECTS THE~~

CAP. II.

The kinds and diversities of them.

THE second thing respects the sorts of doubtings, and these I must also touch.

4. Sorts of doubtings. I conjecture that there are four sorts of doubtings.

1. Some are of admiration: in these the minde doth not gain-say simply, no, it doth beleevē, and is only solicitous about the hidden manner, or way of performance, or accomplishment. Such a doubting

ing was that of the Virgin; Luke
1. 34. How shall this be, seeing I
know not a man? Non dubitat esse fa-
ciendum, sed quomodo fieri possit, in-
quirat, saith Ambrose. Luk. 1. 34.
Ioh. 5. do
Maria in-
terrog.

2. Others are of confirmation:
Where the soule beleeveth, but de-
sires something more to secure
& settle it; so that it might be put
out of all doubt, as was that of
Gideons, Judg. 6. 36, 37, 39. which
kinds of doubtings are the crav-
ings of a little more indulgent
security from God in matters of
extraordinary concernment; not
that we properly question the ve-
rity of him, but that (in respect
of our selves) we might work the
more confidently upon clearer e-
vidence and warrant.

3. A third sort are of negation:
and this is such a forme of scrup-
pling, wherein we plainly suspect
God of his good word of truth;
and is incident unto evill men in
their generall course, and to good
men in respect of some particular
carriages, and businesses, as is evi-
dent

sent in *Zacharias*; *Luke* xi. 18.
Wherby shall I know this? This
question was a question of doubting, and this doubting, no question, was an unbelieving one. It did not credit the Angels message; so is it expressed, *ver. 20. Thou shalt be dumbe, because thou believest not my words.*

4 A fourth sort are of inquisition, where the minde is diversely carried; and is not come to a rest, as when a cause is not come to a sentence, but hangs in suspense. Now of this sort of doubtings we speake at this time, which againe may be branched:

1 Into *Reall*, which questions the principles themselves, either for truth or goodnesse; and so they respect matters of faith; or else they question actions touching lawfulnessse, or unlawfulnessse; and so they respect matters of fact: In which respect they are more specially stiled *Scruples of Conscience*, which are nothing else but some grating and painful.

full doubts about points * practi- * As Rom.
call: Of which see the Casuists. 14. 23.

2 Into *Personall*; where not the things in themselves, but in respect of our selves, are questioned, and only questioned, not peremptorily denied, or rejected, viz. I know, and beleve that God is a Father, that Christ is a Redeemer, and the Saviour of sinners; I now doubt not, whether there be any truth, or good in these, (for these I yeeld) but upon view of my great sinfulness and many defects, I now only question (and this is enough) whether my interest be in that truth and goodness: What is said here of a case respecting Spirituals, the same may be said of that o^r her respecting the promises for Temporals, because that doubtings doe extend to both. See Luke 11. 28.

3 Again, there are two sorts of personall doubtings.

1. Some are private, which remove all presence of faith: of which see, 1 Tim. 2. 8. & Jam. 1. 6.

2. Some

2 Some are contrary, which do minere, but doe not negat; they doe impaire, and keep faith low, but not wholly deny or extinguish it, as in our present Text.

CHAP. III. In this word

Of their possible consistence with

Faith.

Quest.

AND here lyes the kernell; Whether personall doubtings, (i. e.) doubtings of a mans particular interest in God, and Christ, and the promises, may consist with personall Faith?

Ans.

To which I answer, They may for (and mark it well) though

1 Doubtings be sinfull, for they are the smokings of Corruption.

2 They be no part of Faith.

3 They cannot consist at the same instant with the act of faith; for it is impossible that Faith should formally doubt. As it is impossible that I should lay hand

Simile.

on the rock, and not lay hand at the same time; or that mine eye should see, and not see the colour at the same time; or my hand receive, and not receive the gift at the same time: So is it impossible that the soule, when it doth beleeve, should doubt, forasmuch as faith in act, and doubt in act, are opposit, and the soule cannot possibly set out from one faculty at the same time opposite acts; I confesse successively it may, yet simultaneously it cannot: But now to beleeve, and to doubt, are opposit, for in the one I embrace, in the other I do not embrace; in the one I rest, in the other not, &c.

Yet fourthly, Actual doubtings Actual
may be in a person who hath ha-
bituall faith; for this you must know,
that faith and doubtings are not opposed
as life and death, where the presence of the
one determinately concludes the total
absence of the other; but as cold
and heat in remittent degrees in the
subject; where though the nature

of Cold, being not the nature of heat, but naturally one is expulsive of the other, yet both lodge in the same room; So Faith is not Doubting, and Doubting is not Faith; one of these is expulsive of the other, yet both may and doe meet in the same person.

How one
is stiled a
Beleever,
yet hath
doubtings.
Simile.

Who is notwithstanding called a Beleever from the most eminent part: For, as we truly call many persons beautifull persons, though in some one or other limbe there may be some faulty incongruity in nature (because that which is better, still denominates, or gives the name) so we say that Christians are true beleevers, because they have faith really in their soules, notwithstanding many culpable doubtings, which they feele and expresse.

It were a folly indeed that men should think their fields had no Corne, because there are many filthy weeds; or that the heap hath no wheat, because much Chaffe; or the pile no Gold,

be.

because much drosse; or the soule
no faith, because many doubtings.

I had almost said (let it goe, I
thinke it is a truth) there is none
had faith, but hath found his
doubtings. Did you ever see a fire
without smoak? Smoak is no part
of the fire, yet it fireames from
that fuell, to which fire is put.
So it is with faith, and doubt-
ings, &c.

Nay see this truth put out of Believers
all doubt by severall instances in
Scripture; let this of *Matth 14. 13.* ^{have} doubted.

be the first. O thou of little faith,
(said Christ to Peter) wherefore Peter
didst thou dub? Where, though
Christ did reprehend him for
doubting, yet as he doth intimate
his doubting, so his faith too;
He had faith, though little, and
doubtings, though he had that
faith, there was the one, and
there was the other, they were
both in Peter; for he had not slept
out but for faith, and he had not
sunk, but for his doubtings.

Observe Abraham himselfe; the Abraham
Father

Father of the faithfull, yet we finde him winding and turning, shuffling and doubting more then once; if we read Gen. 12. and Gen. 15. 2, 3. and Gen. 20.

David.

Psal. 116.

11.

Psal. 11. 12

God hath forgotten me, &c.

So David had his tremblings, his faintings, his suspicions; all in him was not faith; he in his haste falls out with some for lyers, who yet spake nothing but the truth of God: And so againe, in his haste, he is cut off from before the eyes of God, who yet heard the voyce of his supplications.

Job.

Job also, a man of great sorrows, and of great faith, yet, had he not his qualmes? his shakings? his questionings? indeed in some places he seemes Heroicke in his faith, graciously victorious over all calamities, and riding above waves, yet in other places wee finde the Man, as well as the Believer, he staggers, he seares, he is giving up.

The faithfull in Scripture are compared oftentimes to Trees, which though they be well rooted,

ted, yet may be shaken; and to
Noahs Ark, which though it was
a safe harbour, yet it was tossed;
and to an *house built on a rock*, which
though it be firme, and cannot be
removed, yet it may be moved;
and to *Starres*, which though they
be heavenly, yet are twinkling;
and amongst them, much to the
Moon, which with her light hath
yet some dark spots.

What should I alledge exam- Experi-
ples? let your owne experiences, and
daily complaines sufficiently
answer to this, let them give ver-
dict: Some of you have not yet
risen above your feares. Let God
hold up his favour, doe you not
presently doubt? Let him hold in
his hand, doe you not also doubt?
O how we tosse, and rowle, and
stagger in every sensible difficul-
ty! In matters of this life, scarce
a contrary occurrence which
doth not distract us. Thus is it
with most of us in our infaney,
and in our settings out; But for
you who are of further perfecti-
on.

540

on, who are ripened unto an assurance, perhaps unto a full assurance, can you never remember any bowings, shakings, shiverings, doubtings? Or think you never to meet with any more? I have known the Sunne one day bright, and the next covered; and Davids mountaine strong: But, *Thou didst hide thy face, and anon I was troubled*, Psal. 130.

Besides all this, consider the nature and condition of true faith in this life; it must then be granted, that there may be doubtings with it, forasmuch as no grace is perfect in this life; it hath its contrary in the same subject in some remisse degree: And it is one worke of faith still to be casting out of doubts, which doe rise in the minde: which working could not be, unlesse there they were.

Object.

But you will say, Whence should these arise? Doth God alter in his Love, in his Nature, in his Fidelity? Or doe the Promises

miser (which are the great stay of
faith) goe and come, ebbe and
flow? Doe they vary from them-
selves, either for truth or good-
nesse? Or doth Christ the foun-
dation, the rocke on which
our faith is built, is not he the
same yesterday, to day, and for ever? If
so, how, why, whence is it that a
Believer should doubt?

I answer, That though there
be the samenesse in God, in
Christ, in the Word, yet there is
not an onenesse in us; and the va-
riations in us doe in no wise con-
clude any thing in them, no more
then the severall alterations in
the ayre doe inferre a diversity in
the Sunne, which is one and the
same in respect of It selfe, how-
ever the changes be multiplied
here below. Therefore know,
that the

Wound yet so much like it self
remaines, as to interrupt our
labours, to resist them, yet (and
it wee looke not well unto it)

that
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against
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It is a
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CR.

CAP. IV.

Springs, Causes, and Occasions of
doubting are, or may be these.

The first
cause of
doubting
Originall
sinne; the
fountainne
of unbe-
leeve.

It corrupts
and mis-
informs
the mind,
and with-
holds the
will.

It is a dis-
ease hang-
ing about
the best.

Note.

Naturall corruption: This is
a corrupt root, the seed of
all sin, and of unbelieve. This is
that flesh which doth lust against
the spirit, and thrusts up abundance
of motions, and corrupt reason-
ings, and motives to interrupt
our faith in its great businesse of
believing: So that when we would
do good, evill is present with us;
and when we would believe, un-
believe is present with us.

It is very true, that in our con-
version, the soule is graciously in-
larged, and the powers of sin are
crushed, yet so, that still we goe
with a chaine about our leg; and
though sinne hath its deaths-
wound, yet so much life is still
remaining, as to interrupt our
Graces, to resist them; yea (and
if wee looke not well unto it)

to

to stay and binde them.

He who hath a maim in his leg, cannot move in that maner or measure as he desites; and a wounded hand or arme cannot stretch out it selfe, and lay hold at all times. Corruption is in the best, and will doe its part, and that is one reason why we cannot doe all our part in beleeving.

You know in the Warres, how the intentions and motions of one side are stoppe, and kept up, by the malice, and subtilty, and power of the other; and that there may be many veines of sweetest water under the earth, which yet are many times checked, and controlled, by the falling downe of earth. O this body of sin, which (volentes volentes) we must yet carry about with us, how backward is it to come to Christ? how unbelieving is it? how suspicious? how fearefull? It will not be perswaded, it will not hearken, it will not credit, it will not yett, it will not embrace.

The

The very Disciples, who had the presence of Christ, who saw the Miracles of Christ, who heard the voyce of Christ, how often did they doubt? did they question? *Whence shall we have bread to feed so many? We had trusted it should have been he who should have redeemed Israel.* So that Christ reproves them more then once, or twice, *O flow of heart to beleve, &c. * Why doe * 38. thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I my selfe: But Christ apologiseth for them, The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.*

A second cause of doubting. *Imperfection of faith, this is another cause of doubting. Why should a childe fall so much, and a man so seldome? is it not the weaknesse in the Nerves, and Sinewes, and loco-motive parts? When fire is newly kindled, it is but little, and hath much smoak; so it is with our faith, the more imperfect it is, the more doubting it finds.*

Math. 14. 31. Of them of little faith,

faith, wherefore didst thou doubt? Little faith, and great doubtings goe together; like a little heat, and great mists. Some men are but Babes in Christ, they are but

Weake faith and many doubtings goe together.

plants in the Garden, they are but Lambs in the fold: Now children are apt to feare, and plants to shake, and Lambs to flag behind, and weake Beleevers to doubt; lay a little burden on a Childes shoulder, he knowes not what to doe; shew him the water, he cries out: So is it with weake Beleevers; their strength is not proportioned unto unusuall exigences; neither have they experiences, nor that quicknesse of art to hye them to their helps.

Simile.

And these are great matters; 1. when a man wants strength to deal with his enemy, and 2. when he hath not had experience. Therefore let us consider this yet more, where faith is weak, or imperfect, there are three things incident unto those Beleevers.

They want ability to argue for

Three things in
weak be-
lievers.

David.

Paul.

2 Cor. 1.

David was
right in

Psal. 9. 10

They that

know thy

name will

put their

trust in

thee, for

thou Lord

hast not for-

saken those

that seek

thee.

Elisba's

servant,

2 King. 6.

15, 16, 17.

for their experience is little; and therefore their judgements are not so settled, so that they cannot alwayes maintaine their ground.

David, because of former experiences, he is not amazed at the uncircumcised Philistine, but rests upon that God for victory here, who had granted him former deliverances from the Beare and the Lion. And so Paul confirms him-

selfe, 2 Cor. 1. 10. who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver, in whom we trust, that he will yet deliver; but weak faith hath little experience of Gods truths, and of Gods power, and of Gods method and times.

2 They see their wants and hinderances, more then their helps and encouragements; like Elisba's servant, who saw the multitude of the enemies compassing the City, with Horses and Chariots, and thereupon cryed out, Alas my Master, how shall we doe? but (at first) he saw not the mountaine full of Horses, and Chariots

Chariots of fire round about Elisha, which might have stayed and upheld him.

It is with new and weak Believers, as with the *Israelites*, who did heare of the sonnes of *Anak*, those mighty Gyants, and of the high and mighty walls about the Cities of *Canaan*, they looked on these, and were greatly perplexed, and discouraged, but they did not look on the strong and Almighty God, who did promise to goe with them, and conquer for them: So doe these, they looke upon the meeve temptations and suggestions of Satan, they looke upon the powerfull stirrings of remaining corruption, they look upon the strength of present crosses, they looke upon their owne weaknesse against all these, they looke upon Gods delayings, upon their own dulnesse, and whatsoever may keep them downe; but they look not upon that God who hath promised, who hath performed the Oath to *Abraham*,

the father of the faithfull; they look not upon Christ, who hath by his blood ratified and sealed the Covenant; they look not upon that mighty spirit of Grace in them; they look not upon other standing Christians, who can tell them, that God is true in all his promises, and assuredly righteous, and a present help, and who never failes them that trust upon him, and wait,

The Armory of
faith.

3. They cannot repaire unto the establishments of faith as strong Believers can. They are not yet so acquainted with the Armory of faith; the Promises, they are the Armory of faith; but now these Promises are many, and are graciously framed to the variety of our conditions; which because the beginning Believer knowes not, therefore in the times of changes, being not so ready, having not his weapons, nor being so presently able to send them out, hence it is that doubt-ings do so arise, yea and so grow
upon

upon him in such strength, that he is like to faint.

Note.

You shall experimentally finde many good people, who have in some Cases maintained their ground with credit to their faith, (for they have traversed a particular veine of the Promises, they have found them out, they have applied them, and made use of them, by vertue of which they have borne downe the many rings of doubt and feare in that kind, and have singularly enabled and comforted their hearts against distrust and feare.)

But these self same persons on a sudden have been, and are strangely puzzled, distressed, afraid, doubtfull, full of feares and dejections, and all that they can doe is to beare up, yea and that is hardly done to: Why, what is the matter? have they not faith? Yes; and doth not that faith work? Perhaps it doth in a general way, but with particular efficacy they cannot yet observe it:

How so? This, there is a new kind of trouble, a new burden, which yet they were not put unto, and they cannot finde any promise to reach that same: and hence it is that their feares and doubtings do exceedingly sprout up, and distract them.

And this is found to be very true, that in particular and sensible distresses (be the matter and kinde what they may be) the soule remaines in a hurried perplexity, in a waying unsettledness, untill that faith can finde out a Promise to answer it, either expressly, or virtually: one of these two wayes it must reach us in our conditions, or else our feares are up.

The third
cause of
doubtings
Joh 20.25.

3 The studying of the life of sence: This is another spring of doubting, which is evident in Thomas, John 20. 25. Except I shall see in his hand the print of the nailes, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not beleewe: He must see, and feelee, or else he is faithlesse.

Now

Now to study the life of sense is this, viz. To place the disposition of God, and the issues of our condition in our feelings, and sensible apprehensions: As to believe that God is my God, because I finde him so; That he is gracious, because I finde a sensible answer of my prayers; That he doth accept of my services, because I find that life of affection. So on the contrary, that he is not my God, because I finde not those sensible reports of his favour; I finde not that quickness, and former smartnesse of affections; I finde not present answers unto all my desires and requests; That I am not in the estate of Grace, because I seele not the vigours, and secret increasings of Grace; That I doe not beleieve, because I doe not rejoyce, nor see my sinnes blotted out, &c.

Which kind of life must verily be exposed unto infinite and continuall doubtings. For,

A bowle
upon a
bowle, &c.

Sense
meets
with con-
trarieties,
& cannot
resolve
them: but
faith can
reconcile
all by re-
sting on
God and
his Word.
(David,
Job, and
Paul, &c.)
Conclufi-
ons can
never be
firme,
which de-
pend upon
variable &
change-
able prin-
ciples.

i The soule here hath no con-
stant bottome to settle upon; our
feeling is sometimes more, some-
times lesse, sometimes none at all.
Indeed it is true, that faith may
breed feeling; but then it is as
true, that faith may be without
it: As the soule doth breed seeing
and hearing in the eyes and eares,
yet the soule may be in the man
when these doe not see, and these
doe not heare: A man cannot but
be perplexed in his thoughts, if
he holds this opinion; That meat
doth not nourish him, unlesse he
presently sees how the parts
grow bigger by it; Or, that his
father doth not love him, because
he is not alwayes smoothing and
stroking of him; Or, that his
seed is lost, because it is not a pre-
sent harvest; Or, that the chan-
nell will shortly be dry, and with-
out water, because the Tide is
gone out, and hath left it naked;
in like manner, to conclude a-
gainst our soules from Sensibles,
and Mutables, exposeth it to
the

the labytinth of daily feares and scruples.

But secondly, the soule hereby doth advantage Satan in his suggestions; for the life of sense (like the rowling sea) is open to all winds, it hath a secret, restless, unquiet distemper of its owne; but besides that, it is open to the singular disturbances, and inquietations from the Devill: For the life of sense hath made two propositions for him of the despairing Syllogisme, and he can easily make the other, viz.

Note.

He who hath not the sense of Gods favour, present answers from God, feelings of his Graces in their nature, and measure, cannot be in the state of Grace and Salvation (this is the Maxime of sense) But thou (saith Satan) hast not the sense of Gods favour, &c. Ergo, saith he, Thou are not, Ergo also sayest thou, I am not in the state of Grace and Salvation.

Loe here the afflatus of the life of

C 5

sense!

sense! And now, no marvaile if the soule gives not on upon Christ, or the Promises, but is tossed to and fro, and hangs in extreame suspence.

Yet thirdly, it is a life which doth much dishonour God, and therefore exposed to many feares and unsetlednesse: What? To measure the truths of God by our feeling? and the graciousnesse of God by our sense? what is this but to arraigne God both for truth and graciousnesse? What is this but to let upon God, and give the sentence, which he hath kept in his owne hands? What is this, but to limit the holy One of Israel? yea, to correct his Wisdom, as not being skillfull to order the businesse of our Salvation, nolesse we alwayes have an eye, or a finger at every turn, to know his particular intentions, and proceedings with us?

God will
not stoop
to our un-
beleeving
way of
sense, but
we must
rise to his
groning
way of
faith.

Note.
We know
not what

It is a glorious and singular way to beleeve so long, untill we come downe to feeling. But to begin.

begin with feeling, and so rise to a promise
 believing, is a delusion both dan- will doe;
 gerous and impossible; for thou till we lay
 canst never truly feele, unless hold.
 thou dost first beleve: Canst thou
 truly warme thy heart with that
 Divine favour which faith did
 not let in?

A fourth cause of doubting is: The fourth
 when we deny Faith its matter; cause of
 and grounds to worke: How is doubting?
 that? It is, when we guide the We give
 whole businesse below, and not a not faith
 bove; I will give you some in its perfect
 stances. work and
 full scope

1 You know that the condi- to all ob-
 tion of Grace is exposed to many je & and
 short allowances in externals; all occasi-
 ons.
 and the condition of sinfull men Four in-
 is capable of large prosperity in stances.
 worldly things; A good man Prosperity
 may have many wants, and an of evil
 vill man may have, in this life, men, and
 his good things, (as Abraham adversities
 speakes of *Dives*.) Now when a of good-
 person looks upon the bulk, up-
 on the outward part, upon the
 shell, upon the rinde of things,
 and

and sees plenty with evil men, and poverty with good men; honour shining there, and contempeclouding here; fulnesse for them, and leanness for these; pleasures and liberties attending them, and sorrowes and restraints befalling these; when I say, he looks on this, and no higher then this, it is possible that suspicions and doubtings may start up; it is possible that the soule may linke downe somewhat at it. See an evidence in Asaph, Psal. 73. 2. *My feet were almost gone, my steps bad well-*
nigh slipt. 3. *When I saw the prosper-*
ity of the wicked. 12. *These are the*
ungodly who prosper in the world, they
increase in riches. 13. *Verily, I have*
cleansed my heart in vaine, and washed
my hands in innocency. 14. *For all the*
day long have I been plagued, and
chastened every morning. Observe here his distrusts, and doubts; As if his gracious course did no way benefit him, or as if he had served God for nought.

And thus he goes on, whiles he
bends.

bends his thoughts downward,
whiles he keeps in his faith;
whiles he denied it matter to
work upon; but ver. 17. there he But 17.
gives scope for faith to worke,
and then he is free againe, and
well againe, [*Untill I went into the
Sanctuary of God, then understood I
their end.*]

2 In case of the sinfull condi-
tion; Whiles we look on it, and
deny Faith its matter also to
work upon, we shall be full of
doubtings. Let a man look only Sinfull
upon his sins, upon the nature condition
of them, the aggravations of
them, what will come of it?

1. Strong humiliations, and
those are good. 2. Doubtings
and despaires, and those are bad.
The single considerations of sin,
are the matter only of our feare;
they are a grievous burden: Da- Psal. 38.4
vid was not able to stand under
it, *My sins are too heaue a burden
for me to beare,* Psal. 38. 4.

For what hope is there in our
selves? What is in a sinner to up- Nothing
in a sinner
to uphold.
hold a sinner.

hold a sinner? No burden is an ease to it selfe. Let people be- hold their sins, and not use their faith, they cannot but doubt; for now signe appears in all the motives and causes of feare, and now God appears not in the nature of a friend, but with the countenance of an enemy, and of a severe Judge; and where now can the troubled soule anchor, or fasten, or ease it selfe?

God (you know) hath given unto Man two eares, and two eyes; if we make use of one only, our lives wil often hang in doubt & suspence, If we have not an eare to heare what God saith to an humbled sinner, as well as an eare to heare what Conscience will say unto a sinner: If we have not an eye to looke unto Christ, as well as an eye to look unto our sinnes; an eye to behold the brazen Serpent, as well as an eye to behold the biting fiery Serpent, we cannot then but doubt: As we must give Conscience its scope to worke upon

*psal. 81. 8
I wil hear
what God
the Lord
wil speak,
etc.

and of
Dine
blow
small

upon sin, so we must give faith its scope to worke upon Christ, else we shall neither be freed from our doubtings, nor yet from our sins which cause those doubtings.

3 In case of bodily distractions. Bodily distractions and occurrences, which put us into an exigence or strait; if we looke below only, if wee looke upon their strength and our strength only, it will now be with us, as with David, tired out, and almost spent by the huntings and pursuings of Saul, * I shall one day surely fall by the hand of Saul; or as with Peter, who looking upon the waves, (and not upon Christ) began to sink, and cryed, Lord save me; or as with Jehoshaphat, while he looked upon the great Armies, We know not what to doe. Not long since, we might have read this in our very faces, when the Churches abroad were in great distress; we looked on their dust and ashes, their ruines and weakness; *into Germany.*

David.

* 1 Sam.

17:1.

Peter.

Mar. 14: 30

Jehoshaphat.

2 Chron.

10, 12.

A little before the

K. of Swe-

den came

into Ger-

many.

nesse; we looked on man, and gave up all for lost; We did not looke upon God, and therefore our ship was full of water, our hearts did faile us, doubts and feares, like a black, Cloud did

* This was preached in the times of the great calamities of the Church in Germany.

over-spread us: Nay, at * this very time we heare of an externally disproportionible strength, that the enemies are more in number, they are confederate, they complot, they intend a great designe, and now I finde the feares, the doubts wagging; and assuredly whiles we looke down-ward only, and not upward; whiles we lay events and issues upon the Creature; whiles we give faith no scope to looke up, and worke upon that God who can save by a few as well as by many, we shall never be freed from doubtings.

Whiles our eyes are down, our feares will up.

The very same is true in our personall occurrences; as long as we looke on the things only which we meet withal, and oppose our own strength unto them,

it will be with us as an house *Simile*
without pillars, tottering with
every blast; or as with a ship
without an anchor, tossed with
every wave: For every crosse is
too hard for us, though none
can be too hard for God.

4 So for temptations; Here Temptations
also our doubtings fly up, be-
cause our faith flies not out. O
say we, we are not able to beare,
to withstand, to overcome; the
temptations are strong, and ma-
ny, and daily. Suppose so; And
what do we? Verily we are soon
ready to sit downe, and to give
the day to Satan, never conside-
ring that God gives his Souldi-
ers his Arms, never considering
that the quarrel and battle is the
Lords, he is ingaged in the fight,
for all is for his sake: We think
that God looks on only, and be-
leeve not how much he curbs Sa-
tan, and sustains us; As if Satan
might doe what he pleased, and
God left us alone to grapple;
wheras the Lord makes manifest
his

1 Cor. 13. his power in our weaknesse, and
 Rom. 16. his grace is sufficient for us, and
 he will bruise Satan shortly un-
 der our feet.

The fifth
 cause of
 doubtings. A fifth cause of doubtings,
 may be particular and speciall
 sins after conversion.

Simile.

Which are like water dropped
 into a candle, making it to burne
 flat and dull, with a black snuffe
 at the top, & catching as it were,
 going up and down for hold: or
 as a rheuma, a salt rheum saim in-
 to the eyes, which intercepts the
 sight, and darkens it for a time:
 So do our speciall sins after con-
 version, they do dim, and darken
 the soul, and like those inclosed
 spirits of the aire in the bowels
 of the earth, they cause many
 fearful shakings and tremblings,
 as is evident in David after his
 great sine of Adultery and Mur-
 der, they did exceedingly weaken
 his spirituall condition, and wi-
 ped off all his comfortables.

David.
 Psal. 51.

Beloved, these sins, they must
 needs be a strong spring of doubt-
 ings.

ings, if we do but consider,

1 That it is their nature to set
us off from the shoare & harbor
You know that a ship which lies
quiet in the harbour, or by the
shore, thrust it out, lanch it into
the sea, it is tossed again: Now in

Four
things
here about
speciall
sins.

Simile.

all knowne sins which wound
the conscience (after conversion)
we loosen the Anchor, and put
off; The Promises, and Christ,
(upon which our confidence
were anchored) doe now seem to
give, they will leave, they will
with-draw.

Speciall
sins
though
they loose
not the
estate, yet

But suppose, in their sensible
vertue they should not, (which
yet they doe) nevertheless wee
cannot fasten now, for the very
temper of the soule is injured,
our spirit is wounded. You know
though the staffe doth stand
where it did, and as it did, yet if
my hand be wounded, I cannot
clasp it, nor use it as formerly.

Simile.

Now what think you, must not
the soule needs be filled with
fears, and with doubts, which
hath

hath thrust it selfe thus from
such a gracious harbour as the
mercies, the loving kindnesse,
the sweet and blessed promises
of God? may it not say now, as
David once, Psal. 77. 3. I remem-
bered God, and was troubled? and
wel mayst thou be troubled, who
wouldst for such a sin pull away
thy hand from such a God.

11. 2. God doth really take these
sins ill, very ill, from those up-
on whom he hath conferred
such fruits of his love. For this
is a truth, that in case of offen-
ces, Love and Bounty can give
in the strongest and heaviest ag-
gravations. As in that of David,
2 Sam. 12. 7. I anointed thee King
over Israel, and I delivered thee out of
the hand of Saul: 8. And I gave
thee thy masters house, and gave thee
the house of Israel and Judah; and if
that had been too little, I would more-
over have given unto thee such and
such things. 9. Wherefore hast thou
despised the Commandement of the
Lord to do evil in his sight, &c.

Ob-

Observe how the Lord pleads
 it, and aggravates it upon Da-
 vid. Now when a childe knowes *Simile.*
 that he hath committed a fault,
 (concerning which his father
 gave him a speciall charge, *See*
thou doe it not) and withall hee
 knowes that his father is fully
 acquainted with all the business,
 it is likely (we finde it so) that
 feares and doubtings gather
 within the breast of the childe;
 He dares not keep off, and yet he
 is afraid to come in; he knowes
 that his father hath taken it ill at
 his hands.

So it is with us after our spe-
 ciall finnes, we know that God
 hates them, (he hates them not
 personally, but naturally; not be-
 cause in such persons, but because
 in any persons) their nature is
 repugnant to his: (as we hate
 poyson for it selfe, and therefore
 let it be in a Toad, or in a Prin-
 ces Cabin, we hate it still)
 and they now have saue upon
 such finnes, and have incensed a
 graci-

• Note.
 Sin in any,
 hated of
 God.

Simile.

gracious Father, what notable
feares, what strange misgivings,
what appallings get up now upon
the heart?

Where is my Father? (saith
the offending childe) He is with-
in, (saith one) away he runs; or
he is abroad, and then down he
sits, and weeps, and bewailes his
losse, I shall never gaine his fa-
vour againe.

Thus it is with us after our spe-
ciall sins; If God seeme to draw
towards us, we are ready to fly
from him: I heard thy voyce (saith
Adam) and was afraid, and hid my
selfe: And if he doth not draw
towards us, we sit down, wring
our souls, and fetch many a deep
Ah, Ah, what have I done! Ah
me, What, where am I now? I
have provoked my God, and am
afraid to come unto him, &c.

3 God doth not easily open
his favour unto those who thus
abuse it: There was free inter-
course twixt God and the soule
before; but now the doore is
shut,

shut, which before was open, and God himselfe will keep the key, so that nothing, no meanes or wayes shall open unto us, untill he doth please. You remember how David kept his distance from Absalom for his lewdnesse, he kept him off a long time, he might not see the Kings face: And David himselfe for his sinnes against his Father, could not (without long suings) see the face of God, as before, Psal. 51.

David to
Absalom.

And God
to David.
Psal. 51.

And now think you it strange that the soule should doubt? Assuredly great desires delayed and prorogued doe cause great fears; yea, it breeds singular suspitions, May be I shall be still put off; Will the Lord cast off for ever? and will he be favourable no more?

Note.

Psal. 77. 7.

Psal. 77. 7

4 Nay, now the soule being made sensible, & having weighed all circumstances, can and doth teach it selfe many arguments and reasons to keep off; It is apt enough to fall upon it selfe, and

Tender & wounded hearts apt to multiply exceptions against themselves.

to

to keep downe any readinesse
which it observes to give on up
on God, or Christ.

It is some time before faith can
finde a way to ingratiate this of-
fending soule, and to espie a suf-
ficient *medium*, by and through
which it may close with God
for pardon and favour: And
when faith hath found it out,
then our mis-giving hearts beat
us off; and as our weake chil-
dren pluck down the Bird soar-
ing up, with a string, so doe our
weak hearts pull in our faith;
which is now speeding towards
heaven by the blood of Jesus
Christ for us.

The more tenderesse we gaine
of the sins, the more shynesse
and feare growes on us, and sel-
dome doth the soule recover its
former hold, and ancient corre-
spondence and intimatenesse
with God, until there hath been
a proportionable humiliation,
and spaces of setled reformati-
on; Twixt which, and the great
disco-

discovery of speciall, and renew-
ed assistance, the heart meets with
many a wave, with many a sad
day, with many a fearfull rising,
with many strong and terrible
doubtings.

So then you see, that speciall
sins after conversion, doe cause
great doubtings in the soule, be-
cause they make a jar, a wound;
they lay a bar twixt us and God,
they keep up God, and keep down
faith, and give up all the mat-
ter of disheartning and fearing;
they make the soule to be, at a
stand, to goe away from the gates
of heaven many times with sin-
gular checks; And heauen assigned

6 A sixth cause of doubtings,
may be indispositions unto, or
about spirituall duties: when our
Altar seems to have no fire, our
bodles to have no soules, our af-
fections to be estranged from our
service; when we pray, but not
with that fervency; when we
heare, but not with that atten-
tiveness; when we see upon any

I like the
doubts
troubles
a Captain
when he
cannot
make his
men com-
mand, and
right
I will
to see

A sixth
cause of
doubtings.

More

warmed the heart in duty; I have
 rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies,
 (Psal. 119. 14.) and with my whole
 heart have I sought thee; so David,
 Thy word was unto me the joy, and re-
 joycing of my heart, for I am called by
 thy name, O Lord of Hosts, saith Je-
 remiah, Chap. 15. 16. And the
 Prophet Esa, chap. 56. 7. saith,
 God will make his people joyfull in his
 house of Prayer: And besides all
 this, we are commanded, to serve
 the Lord with gladnesse, Psal. 100. 2.

Psal. 119. 14

David.

Jer. 15. 16

Esa. 56. 7.

Psal. 100. 2.

Whereupon the soule mis-
 gives, How can my condition be
 good, which differs so much from
 the secret and lively dispositions
 of Grace? How can it be good
 which is so unanswerable to that
 quicknesse promised, and found
 in the people of God? How can
 I be good, who about the actions
 of good am so dull, and heavie,
 awkward, and slow? &c.

But then, suppose the soule
 can cleare, and attioyle it selfe
 from this feare, (by knowing
 that fire may be where it doth not

alwayes flame, and the roote may live where the branches doe not alwayes flourish, and by finding some answerable dulnesses in some eminent *Dauids*, (who often have prayed for quickning) yet there ariseth another doubting from our dulnesse, and indisposition, which is a feare of acceptance; the Lord will not accept of these services, because they are so heauey, they are therefore without any efficacy. Suppose I may be good, yet they are bad, and can win no favour with God. Thus the soule is oft-times much perplexed by reason of its indispositions; as if elther it were totally bad, or God intended little good unto it, because it is not quickned, and more enlivened in the services presented unto him. And verily it will much trouble a tender and sincere heart to observe in it selfe such flat and dull opinions of God, and Christ, and such an ineptitude in it selfe in doing that, which to do with
the

the best of its strength, and might, and affections, it sees reasons, and hath desires thereto.

7 A seventh spring, or occasion of doubtings may be fruitlesse endeavours; I call them so, because we think them so: What is that? This it is; When we finde our defects in our particular graces, and in particular duties, or some effects of particular corruptions; and have gone to God by Prayer, & in his ordinances, so that we have a long time prayed for the filling up, and enlarging of our weake faith, love, sorrow, joy, assurance, and prayed against that hardnesse, passionatenesse, or whatsoever sinfulness observed in the heart: And yet we seeme to be still where we were, we creep on with the same impotencies in grace, and move on with the same burdens of sinfull motions and propensions: O now the soule sits downe with much sorrow, and with dolefull conclusions: Well, it is in vaine to seeke

A seventh
cause of
doubtings

D &

any

Esa. 16. 12

dimmed A
to store
ryndub

any more, God will make that good to me which hee threatned unto Moab, Esa. 16. 12. Hee shall come unto his Sanctuary, and shall not prevaile. I have sought him a long time, and have not prevailed; I shall never rise above these risings; If God had a purpose to doe me good, I should have been sped ere this.

The opinion of successelesse must needs cause doubtings, because

Three
things in
this.

1. God seems to have a controuersie with the soule; surely, saith the heart, something is the matter that I cannot have audience, all is not right and even twixt God and me.

2. The very stays and supports of duty seem to fail us. You know, that the Promises are the great encouragements of all our seruices; and what have we to binde God but his owne Promises, by which he hath bound himselfe? He hath said, that he will heare, and answer; upon which assurance
of

of his, we came in, and prayed,
but cannot get any thing, though
we presse God upon his owne
promise; Whereupon the soule is
brought to a stand, If God will
not answer his owne word, how
shall he answer me?

3 Now we suspect not our pe-
titions, but our persons, and un-
comfortably judge or feare, that
we have been deceived in our
progresse towards heaven: God
would be to us as to his, (a God
hearing Prayers) If we had been
to God as his, serving him with
a perfect heart, for God beareth not
sinners, Joh. 9. 31. But, If any man
be a worshipper of God, and doth his
will, him he beareth. Whereupon
the soule strongly argues against
it selfe, My heart is full, or else
my prayers had been successfull; I
regard iniquity in my heart,
therefore it is that the Lord hears
me not, Psal. 66. 18.

Joh. 9. 31

Psal. 66. 18

Beloved, you who deale with
observation and experience can
acknowledge

D. 4.

1. That

Observe
three
things.

1 That there are spaces twixt our prayers and Gods answers: God hearkens what David speakes, and David must hearken what God will speake: Prayer is our Angle, our Seed, our Dove, our Messenger, it doth not alwayes take at first, it doth not returne us alwayes a present harvest, it comes in sooner, and sometimes later, it waits the time of the master.

2 God is wise in causing these spaces, he hath ends, singular ends both for his own glory, and for the good of our graces.

Simile.

But thirdly, corruption takes occasion hereby, and Satan vents his envious malice hereupon: As the back-biters, and slanderers, and contentious spirits, who love to set variance twixt faithfull friends, let the least occasion happen, a wry look, a mis-placed word, a mis-intended neglect, a forbearing of present dispatch in some desired service; let these fall out, presently the back-biter, envious,

vicious, malicious, contentious spirit, catcheth; Loe, you see his love, his backwardnesse, his sleighting of you, &c.

Thus doe our corrupt hearts, and Satan; Look you now, you see how needlesse, how fruitlesse all the care and service of God is; ^{Hence Da- vids why is the Lord so far from bearing? 1st his mercy clean gone?} Alas, he thinkes not on you, he regards not your prayers: If he had loved you, if he intended to doe you good, could this bee? would he have held up after so many prayers, so many teares, so many importunities, so many pressings by his mercies, by his Christ, by his promises? No, no, thou art not in favour with God, his mercies, his promises belong not to thee, &c. Thus they.

8 An eighth spring may bee, The imbecillity of judgement about the essentials of Salvation; and assuredly, here lyes the great spring of doubtings. An erroneous minde is the forge which hammers all our suspicions; it is the wombe which beares and

breeds all our feares: If it doth
not finde, yet It makes all our
knots for us.

What one speaks of a plaine
place of Scripture, This verse,
said they had been easie, had not
Commentators made it so knot-
ty: That we say of a Christians
condition, It is gracious, happy,
clear, sure, did not erroneous
judgements disturbe, and vex, and
unsettle them. This is true, that
a weak judgement, and a tender
conscience are seldome without
feare and doubting. You see it in
the *Romans*, about practicall mat-
ters, whereupon the Apostle
Rom. 14.¹ presseth the stronger, not to receive
22. the weak to doubtfull disputations;
and if they had a particular
faith, to keep it unto themselves,
knowing well, how weak judge-
ments, like weak plants, are easi-
ly stirred and shaken.
You may see it also in the *Ephe-
sians*, about doctrinall mat-
ters; for Paul giving an *Exhortation*
to them to out-grow their childlike-
ness,

ness, Ephes. 4: 14. he doth Paraphrase it to be such an estate wherein men are tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind, &c.

Two things are incident unto shallow judgements (by virtue of which they are objected (with ease) unto doubtings. Two things incident to this.

One is, they have not been conversant in the compasse of Truths, there be some Truths which yet they know not; they have not all their holds and strength.

New Doctrines contrary to old Truths, are not so easily over-mastered by their understandings, but doe either win misbeliefs, or else disturbe their true beliefs. You shall scarce hear any new things started, but withall we heare of many persons startled, as if their faith had hitherto been in vaine; for tender Consciences are apt to beleeve the most, and therefore sometimes do beleeve those points which are false.

A man must have good eyes to finde out cunning glosses.

Shall I

Instances.

Shall I give you instances amongst our selves? 1. One is an equality of humiliation before conversion: As if no man were truly converted, who hath not equalled the greatest Penitent in the highest degrees of contrition and terror. And hence it is that many distressed, bowed, broken soules, doe exceedingly labour to grinde themselves, and to fall into the flames of horrible feares, thereby to assure themselves of a good estate: Whereas,

1. All Christians are not equall in their preparations. 2. No man can judge his estate at all, simply, by legall humiliation.

Simile.

2. A full assurance at first, or else no faith: As if Jacobs Ladder had no degrees, and the Sun at his first peeping were in the height of heaven; or that a Schollar must be placed in the upper forme, as soone as he enters the Schoole. Such inconsiderate deliveries as these, they trouble the faith of many (as the Apostle speaks of those

those in 2 Tim. 2. 18.) If faith cannot be without full assurance, then I am no Believer, saith David, for I had my faintings; Nor I, saith Peter, for Christ himselfe tells you, I had my doubtings.

It is a most vaine and dangerous way for any Divine or ordinary Christian to impose Rules, and to deliver a thing, as a dogmaticall and common truth, which he or he have in a speciall way only observed in themselves: The Spirit of God bestowes upon all the Elect of God, the same substantiall frame of Grace; but the making up, and the making out of these, is different: As, No *Simile.* man must say he hath no soule, because he feesles not those particular workings of reason and desire which another doth; So, No man must conclude another to be out of the estate of Grace, if haply there be not a plenary and averablenesse in them both, for every method and measure of working grace.

There

An Item
to the
stronger
Christians

Therefore let me caveat a litle
here, to you who are growne
Christians. Remember that there
are some who are weak, yet true
members of the same body: and
doe not you indiscreetly insist
upon your only personall expe-
riences, and those only in some
particulars, in all companies, be-
cause you have (perhaps) risen
high, therefore none are right, who
are below you: Consult the
Scriptures, and deliver us what it
directs, and wherein it supports:
You know not yet the aptnesse in
tender Consciences to throw
downe themselves, and to catch
at matters and arguments of
trouble. Thou sendest (perhaps)
from thy company, a poore, a la-
den and troubled heart, with a
bitter and amazed opinion, that
it hath now no faith, which yet
came into thee with some weak
and strong desires of firmer faith.
Weak Judgements (as I said
before) cannot beare all things,
but (like some men's stomachs)
are

are presently oppressed with
meats unusuall: And when we
have mistaken an error for truth,
it may prove to the soule, as the
mistaking of poyson for Medi-
cine, a businesse of troublesome
and dangerous consequence.

Ignorance of the Doctrine A ninth
of Justification; this is another cause of
cause of doubting. doubtings.

The Doctrine of Justification
is a Doctrine of Life, Rom. 5. 18. Rom. 5. 18.
The free gift came upon all men unto
justification of life. And it is a Do-
ctrine of Peace, Rom. 5. 1. Being Rom. 5. 1.
justified by faith we have peace with
God, &c. And therefore the igno-
rance of it must needs be a cause
of feare and doubting.

Here consider foure things. Pour
things.

1. The Christian condition is
subject to many sensible impres-
sions: We are seldome without guilt is
assault, or combat; and those trouble-
pierce us most which the consci-
ence throwes up. A man may
beare any wound with more ease, when one
then that which he hath given ned.

Iob 13. 26

Prov. 18.

14.

David.

Paul.

Some-
thing to
answer &
account
for it.

Simile.

himselfe. When the Law power-
fully reveales, and the Consci-
ence closely applyes the guilt of
our nature and lives, now it is a
sad and heavie time. Job cryes out
in the sense of this sting; Chap. 13.
26. Thou writest bitter things against
me, and makest me to possesse the in-
iquities of my youth. Salomon tells us,
that the wounded spirit is hardly
sustained; Prov. 18. 14. David is
even dried up by his roaring, and
worne away with the paine of it.
And Paul cryes out as a man al-
most lost, Rom. 7.

3 The soule makes out at such
a time for some stay, and help: It
seekes where it may lay his bur-
den, and finde something to ease
& deliver it. It is with a sick soul
as with a sick body, which turns
from one side to another, from
this part to the other part of the
bed, and of the pillow, and
craves help of this friend and of
another, would have ease from
any, but perchance can get none
from all.

Here.

Here is sinne, saith the person ;
 here is a sinfull soule, and there is
 a righteous Law broken, and a
 righteous God offended, who
 yet must, and will be satisfied :
 He call upon me, and hath arre-
 sted my Conscience : Now good
 Lord, what shall I doe ? I have
 nothing to pay, or that can give
 satisfaction. *Where with shall I*
come before the Lord, and bow my
selfe before the high God ? Shall I come
before him with burnt offerings, with
calves of a yeare old ? Will the Lord Micha 6,
be pleased with thousands of rams, or 6, 7.
with ten thousands of rivers of oyle ?
Shall I give my first-borne for my
transgression ? the fruit of my body
for the sinne of my soule ? q. d. Those
 are nothing, those can doe no-
 thing ; my sins are many, great,
 deep, my righteousness is none,
 or too weake to answer for my
 unrighteousnesse ; All the good I
 have, or can doe, cannot expiate
 the evill which I have done, or
 make up that good which I
 should have. Here is some sorrow,
 but

but what is that? it is but as a drop to the Ocean of guilt which lies upon me: Here is some duty, but what is that? it is defective in it selfe, and no amends to the many thousands of breaches which I have made.

Nothing
in our
selves.

3 The soule cannot stay it selfe upon it selfe: God calls for satisfaction; I have it not, saith the soule: God will have satisfaction: Lord! what shal I now doe? The Conscience workes upon us, and tels us, God is just, and if these sins be not pardoned, and a righteousnesse found and presented, we are lost. Now the soule is at a stand, seriously and sadly bethinks, What have I? Nothing but sin, yet sin cannot answer for sin: Perhaps some imperfect holinesse, but that cannot make up a perfect satisfaction.

O my brethren! our blood and spirits must needs goe and come, when the arrest is upon us, and none appears to bayle us: when the ship is split, and no rocke is neare.

neare to save us : when the sentence of death is read against us, and none is at hand to pardon us : when the Avenger of blood pursues us, and no City of refuge opens to shelter us : unrighteousnesse, inability, and Conscience and God meet, and none yet, nothing is yet found to answer for us, or to pacifie us.

4 Without us there is something able to stay us, of which the soule being ignorant, is still perplexed : it cannot conclude its feares, and scruples, and doubts.

What is that?

Object.

I answer, Justification is the stay, and therefore the soule must needs be burdened, being unacquainted with it : As,

Sol.

1 Till we know where to lay Three down our sinfull burden, we must things needs be troubled : If a perplexed soule could finde any to charge his debts upon, who would beare and answer for him, then it might have rest : Now Christ in Justification takes our guilt upon him :

As

Philem. 18. As Paul said to Philemon concerning his servant Onesimus, If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that upon mine account: So saith Christ to the broken and laden sinner, If thou hast any guilt, and sinfull debts to be answered for unto God, put them upon mine account; If thou hast wronged my Father, I will make all even, looke for thy discharge and acquittance by me; for I was made sinne for thee, that thou mightest bee made the righteousness of God in me,

1 Cor. 5. 21. 2 Cor. 5. 21. and God was in me, reconciling the world unto himselfe, not imputing their trespasses unto them; And 1 Joh. 2. 1. If any man sin, he hath an Advocate with the Father, &c.

3 Till we know our justifying righteousness, we cannot but be troubled: That righteousness which justifies us, is not in us: No righteousness justifies, but that which is every way perfect and full, now this is in Christ, and not in us, Rom. 5. 19. By the
obe-

obedience of one, many shall be made Rom. 5. 19

righteous. When a sinner is to stand

before God for acceptance and

life, he stands not before him in

his owne rags, but in the gar-

ment of his eldest Brother: Hee

cannot say, Lord, here is a right-

eousnesse in me which hath ful-

filled thy Law; here is a righte-

ousnesse in me, against which

thou canst make no excepti-

on; here is a righteousnesse in

me, for which thou art to ac-

count, and pronounce me just:

But this he may say, Lord, though

I have no perfect righteousnesse

to answer thee, yet thy Son hath

for me, and he is made unto mee

from thy self, my righteousnesse, wis-

dome, sanctification, and redemption,

1 Cor. 1. 30. And being justified by

faith in it, he may have peace with

God, through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Rom. 5. 19.

Brethren, no man can be free

from strong feares and doubts,

who thinks to be acquitted, or

condemned by what is in him-

selfe:

et. 2. mo. H. selfe: If a man thinkes this, The
 Lord will, or doth enter into
 Judgement with me, and I finde
 nothing to satisfie him; all the
 powers of my heart, and of my
 graces are insufficient, and there-
 fore there is now no hope but I
 shall be cast, and condemned; you
 see here is ground of doubting;
 yet if a man could looke out of
 himselfe, and know that his right-
 eousnesse is to be found in
 Christ, and God hath appoynted
 it so, that I am to be justified by
 that righteousnesse only; now
 the soule may have a stay to rest
 on: Yet my Saviours righteous-
 nesse was perfect, was accepted,
 and he is mine, and his righte-
 ousnesse is mine.

3 Till we know the dispositi-
 ons (if I may so speake) in God
 about our justifying, we cannot
 but doubt; for a man reasoneth
 thus: I have committed great
 sins, which now doe grieve me,
 and I hate them, and I have left
 them, but I know not how they
 may

now cause doubtings. Untill we know that God for Christ will justify from great sins, as well as small, 1 Cor. 6. 8. 9. and that he blot out the thicke cloud, as well as this cloud, Eph. 4. 31. 32. have blotted out, as a thicke cloud, thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins: and that there were expiatory sacrifices, not only for infirmities, but also for enormities, all which typified the vertue of the blood of Christ, which justifies from great sins, &c. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

1 Cor. 6.
8, 9, 10.
Eph. 4. 31. 32.

But I have nothing to move God to pardon them. Yet pardoning is a gracious work: God pardons sins, not for thy sake, but for his owne sake, Eph. 4. 32. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. But God will call me hereafter to account again, though for a while he seems to be graciously pleased.

Object.
A
in
Sel
Eph. 4. 32.
Eph. 1. 7.
Baid
Object.
102

No,

Sol.

No, the Lord in his new Covenant of Grace assures the contrary, *Ier. 31. 34. I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sinne no more.* So that you manifestly see, how the ignorance of our Justification leaves the soule in great doubtings; because 1. A man knowes not where to cast his burden. 2. Where to finde his righteousness. 3. What is the overture, and fulnesse, and love, and graciousnesse, the fidelity, and irrevocablenesse of God in justifying a sinner by Christ.

A tenth
cause of
doubtings.

10 A tenth cause of doubtings, is disputation against the Promises: You have heard (heretofore) that the ignorance of the Promises is an occasion of doubting; and now I am to shew you, that the arguing of the soule against them, is also another cause.

Object.

But you will say, Doth any man dare to dispute against Gods Promises?

Sol.

I answer, The Promises may be

be considered, 1. In respect of The Promises considered two waies.
their absolute truth and good-
nesse: Thus they are not dispu-
ted against, unlesse by Atheists,
and positive unbeleeveres, as were
those scoffers, 2 Pet. 3. 4. who
said, *Where is the promise of his
coming?*

2. In respect of their applicati-
on and extent: Thus many weak
beleeveres are, subject to argue a-
gainst them: Not, whether they
be verity and mercy; not, whe-
ther righteousness and peace doe
meet in them; but, whether these
doe reach to them, and may bee
applied by them. Nay, that is not
all, they doe oft-times upon un-
just grounds, thrust away the Pro-
mises from themselves.

And now the soule must needs
be hurried with feares and doubt-
ings, in case the condition be sen-
sible, because

The Promises are to faith as Three rea-
sons of it.
ground unto the Anchor; cast out
an Anchor, and if it hath not
ground to fasten, or hitch in, the
Ship

Ship rowls still : This is a truth
 if faith cannot pitch and fix, the
 soule cannot be quiet and set-
 tled. David in one place useth the
 comparison of a Bird, that his
 soule did bye into God, as a bird into
 her nest. Whiles the bird is in the
 ayre, it is hovering, and flying,
 and restlesse; so is it with the soule,
 untill faith can settle it under the
 wings of a Promise.

Noahs
 Dove
 found no
 rest for the
 sole of her
 foot:

Nay, againe, the Promises are
 called the breasts of consolation.
 When the childe is hungry, and
 disempered, nothing quiets it
 but the breasts. And assuredly, if
 the Promises do not still the soule,
 nothing can.

Now when a man will rove
 from this ground of faith, when
 he will fly from his rest, when he
 refuseth the breasts of consolati-
 on, no marvaile if his soule be
 full of doubts and feares: For this
 is all one, as if a lame man should
 throw away his crutches, or a
 weak man his staffe, or a sick man
 his cordials, or a sinking man the
 bough

though which holds him up
 The goodnesse of the Lord (promised to David) was that which
 did hold up all his faintings; and
 so all Gods people have still been
 held & fluffed up by Gods VVord:
 and therefore that person must
 needs be full of doubts, who
 withdrawes his shoulder from
 such a stay and rock, upon which
 he should leane and rest himself;
 - as It is his businesse, which is
 ever accompanied with unquiet-
 nesse; for why dost thou refuse to
 apply those Promises which God
 hath made? Is it not because,
 Thou wouldst have more
 goodnesse, fitt, & Lesse unbelief
 first? And is not this a self-seek-
 ing, yea, in some sort a self-stan-
 ding? VVhat law odds and un-
 seemly method of worshipping
 of God is this? Lord, I have but
 weak grace, and thou hast pro-
 mised to strengthen it, and per-
 fect, and finish it, but I will not
 beleve thy Promise belongs to
 me, until I have first a greater

Psal. 27. 13

And words
 I will I shall
 believe
 words shall
 will do it

Note.
 So thou
 hast pro-
 mised to
 pardon
 sins, &c.

increase of my grace. Or thus, Lord, I finde much unevennesse in duty, and thou hast promised to give thy Spirit, which shall cause me to walke in thy way, but I will not beleve this Promise, untill I be first more enabled in duty. Or thus, Lord, I finde much sinfulness in me, and thou hast promised to change and cleanse the heart, and to subdue iniquity, but I will not beleve this Promise, untill first I see my sins subdued: VVhen I finde my graces increased, then I will beleve that thou wilt increase them; when I finde my obedience continued, and my sins subdued, then will I beleve that thou wilt cause mee to walke, and wilt subdue sins. *q. d.* if thou wilt performe thy Promise before I doe beleve thy Promise, then I will beleve thy Promise. This is as if a man would see the blood in the veines, before the veines are opened; or wash his hands cleane, before he hath turned the cock to let out the water.

When
thou hast
done it,
then I wil
beleve
that thou
wilt do it,

Simile.

3 A man is still held by the powers of his corruption; and where corruptions, or wants are still found in their former measure, there the tender soule will doubt and feare.

Let a man bestow himselfe much in hearing, or much in praying, or much in conferring, yet if he have the art of thrusting away the Promises, he will be still as he was : v. g. Suppose a man to be sick, call unto his help a Colledge of Physitians, let them consult upon his estate, prescribe the most fitting potions, and quickning cordials, and when the Patient hath heard them, he refuseth their prescriptions, he will not take them, but saith, These belong not to me ; will his disease at all abate ?

Simile.

So is it with us ; when we hear, or read, or confesse, and many Promises fall in to our helpe, if yet we put them aside, we now keep up our sinfulnessse, or weaknesses, and therefore keepe up

our doubtings and distrusts.

Object. But you will say, all Promises are not applyable by all men in all conditions, and therefore good reason for us to hold off.

Sol. To which (briefly) thus much: Though all Promises cannot be applyed by all men at one time, yet some Promises may be applyed by an humble and sensible sinner at some time or other, *v. g.*

Note. Suppose thou feele the power of sin stirring in its motions and workings, and (as *Rom* complaines) leading thee captive: though every Promise cannot now be applyed, yet thou dost ill in not fasting on the Promises of Mortification, which are made for this end, that the sensible and weary sinner should lay hold on them for the subduing of his sins.

Againe, suppose thou findest weakness of Grace, (that thou canst not doe the good that thou wouldst doe) dost thou now well to thrust away the Promises of assistance and strengthening, by

say-

saying, What is that to me, if God hath said, *I will uphold, and I will strengthen, and My grace is sufficient, and My power shall be manifest in weaknesse?*

So againe, suppose thou feelest the guilt of sin, piercing and afflicting thy conscience, and God hath promised to pardon iniquities, transgressions, and sins, and to love freely, and to receive graciously, dost thou now well, or wisely, to thrust away the pardoning Promises, and say, What are they to such a one as I am? Is any begger should say, What is that to me, that there are bountifull almes at the rich mans gate? Or a Malefactor, What is that to me, that the Prince will pardon Traitors? Or a sensible finner, What is that to me, that Christ did dye for sinners, and God will be mercifull to returning sinners? &c.

II An eleventh cause of doubtings may be the suspension of divine favour; when God holds up his countenance, the light of it

Eleventh
cause of
doubtings

from shining into the heart, so that a Christian doth not enjoy his day as before, his God as before, in the sensible evidences of his loving favour, now the soule may (possibly) fall into singular distrusts and feares. See it in Da-

Psal. 30. 7 *vid, Psal. 30. 7. Lord, by thy favour thou hast made my mountaine to stand strong; thou didst bide thy face and I was troubled.* A Christians life is in some respect, like a Courtiers, who is neare his Princee, upon his countenance or forbearance all his comforts or discomforts doe depend, VVe may say of him, what *Mary* spake, when she lost

Luk. 2. 48 *Christ, Luke 2. 48. Behold, thy Father and I have sought thee sorrowing, (i.e.) with an heaue heart. So, &c.*
But.

Object. How appeares it that this suspension of divine favour should occasion our doubting?

Sol. Thus :
Four things. 1 Gods favour is the greatest good; *Thy favour is life, Psal. 30. 5* he there expresseth Gods favour by

by that good which of us is most
desirable: Nay, Thy favour is bet-
ter then life, Psal. 63. 3. Therefore psal. 63. 3.
he cryes out, Psal. 36. 1. O how ex- 36. 7
cellent is thy loving kindnesse! and
prayer, vers. 10. O continue thy lo- 10.
ving kindnesse. And Psal. 106. 4. 106. 4.
Remember me, O Lord, With the fa-
vour that thou bearest unto thy people,
5. That I may see the good of thy cho- 5.
sen, &c.

Now the sensible good of the
greatest good, must needs imprint
the motions of greatest feare, and
suspicion, and trouble, as you may
see in David, Psal. 77. 3. 7. &c.
For now the glory seemes to be departed
from Israel.

2. Againe, In these times no-
thing can comfort the soule, or
stay it without much difficulty:
Our very graces will hardly up-
hold us. You know that if the
King clouds his countenance,
they are not the dignities confer-
red which will content us; they
are not our renewes and posses-
sions which will cheate us: So is it

Simile.

with

E. 5.

with us; when God drawes up
 his loving countenance; they are
 not our riches; or our gifts, or our
 graces, or our services, which can
 delight us; these doe it, whiles
 in them we see Gods love shining
 towards us; but if that draw
 back, these are all put to a strait;
 All is nothing to David, whiles he
 is under this enquiry, *Will the Lord*
be favourable no more? Psal. 77.
God doth seldome draw up
his favour, but for some unkind-
nesse on our part: Our sins (or-
dinarily) are the clouds, which
hide his face from us; they are
the wall of separation: perhaps
some great sin, as Davids; perhaps
some carelesse esteemes of him,
speaking in his Ordinances; per-
haps some sleight passing by of his
secret motions and counsels; as
the Church, Cant. 5. 2. Open to me
my sister, my love, my dove, my unde-
filed, &c. To which voyce of
Christ, how doth the Church de-
meane her selfe? 3. I have put off
my gown, how shall I put it on? At
length,

length, though vers. 6. I opened to my Beloved, but my Beloved had withdrawn himselfe, and was gone; my soule failed, &c.

How can the soule but be greatly troubled, when it hath turned its day into night, and shut up that light, which once it enjoyed, to its great comfort and solace? Woman, why weepest thou? (said Christ to Mary, Joh. 20. 15.) Because (said she) they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him: So may we justly weep, when our sins have taken away our God from us, in his comfortable favour, and we cannot easily regaine him, and finde him.

4 These times of suspension, ordinarily are times of triall; wherein God leaves the Christian to some notable combats, and to the great exercises of Graces; at which time, corruptions and temptations will stir, and therefore no marvaile, if they be times mixt with some feares and doubting.

The
twelfth
cause of
doubtings.

12 Another spring of doubtings is, the crediting of Satans testimony touching our estate; when we rest upon his judgement, and see our conditions through his informations.

Simile.

You know that objects are diversly represented unto the eye: sometimes from themselves in their proper nature, as when a man sees a green colour as it is; sometimes mediately, by other things, as when a green colour is seen through a red glasse; now it doth not appeare in its native colour, but in the likenesse of that through which it is perceived: So is it with our spirituall estate.

Exempl.

Sometimes it is represented unto us, as it is truly exisiting; and thus we shall see it, and judge of it by the VVord of God: And sometimes it is represented unto us, not as it is, but as it appeares in some corrupt and deceivable testimonies, and reports unto us: As Josephs chastity appeared to his Master under the nature of abominable

minable uncleanneſſe, when hee took the testimony of it from his filthy wife: So ſhall our moſt innocent and upright frame appear unto us to be nothing elſe but baſeſt hypocrisie, if we put the iſſue of it upon Satans informations: For as Satan hath an art to colour over the true condition of ſinfull bondage, keeping cloſe and in covert the proper image, or (rather) deformity of it: So he hath a deluſion too, in hiding from our eyes the true powers of gracious ſincerity, and fetching up to the judgement all our weakneſſes, and preſent imperfections, with all former known evils, with which he doth ſo totally poſſeſſe the minde, that it can hardly ſee any thing that good is in it ſelfe, or if it doth, yet it ſees ſo much corruption and imperfection, as that it is ready almoſt to turne the ſcale and billance.

And here our crafty enemy ceaſeth not, but taking the advantage of a tender conſcience,
he

he exaggerates upon us the large distance of this condition in which we now are, from that which God commands and expects, and hath found in some of his righteous servants; in the citation of whose piety he is not very sparing, that by the consideration of their fulnesse, and our owne emptinesse, we might the more easily suspect our condition, and credit his relations.

Which if we once doe, *Bene Deus* ! into what labyrinths doe we wind our selves ? into what fears ? into what doubts ? VVe shall never set out to beleeye any Promise, but he checks us backe with the hollownesse of our condition ; we shall never set upon any ordinance or duty, but hee foyles us with suspicions (i at least) that all is in vaine, God will not blesse and prosper his Ordinances unto such ; and in those Ordinances, if any matter of bitterness, or uncomfortable-
ness be delivered, he brings home
that

that to us, and tells the soule, This
is thy portion.

Now where our estate rests up-
on a deceitfull informer, where
we take things, as Satan makes
them, where we judge of sin, as he
pleads it, and of Gods love to us,
as he conveyes it, and of Gods
Promises, as he interprets them to
us, and of our owne Graces, and
holy temper, as he cleares and e-
videnceth them unto us, there
can be nothing but jealousies,
feares, distractions, and daily
doubtings in the heart.

13. Another spring may be A chieft
some new risings of old sins after teene
humiliation, and some singular spring
assurance of their pardon.

David gives a touch at this (I Psal. 25. 7
think) Psal. 25. 7. when he prayes,
Remember not the sins of my youth, nor
my transgressions. So doth Job, 13, Iob 13. 26
26. Thou writest bitter things against
me, and makest me possesse the iniqui-
ties of my youth.

It would trouble us to see a Simile
man rise out of his Grave, (who
hath

hath been buried a long time) and now to haunt us : So these sins which we have long since committed, and long since bewailed, and long since renounced, and after long humiliations their discharge hath been obtained ; to meet these sins (like an enemy, with a sword in his hand) with guilt in their faces and countenances; againe, this will amaze the soule, it will appale it, and startle it, and make us more then once to sigh and inquire, VVhy is it so?

Two things.

Two things will now fall into question :

I The reality of pardon : where God saith, he pardons sinne, there he saith, that he will remember it no more ; but it seemes hee doth remember it, (else how comes it thus upon me as a debt not yet discharged, as a guilt not yet removed ?) and if hee doth thus remember it against me, I much feare, that as yet the Book is not crossed, this sin is not pardoned.

doned. Upon which, something else may fall in; If this sin be not pardoned, perhaps the rest are not; and if this be risen up against me, how can I tell but all the rest may (afresh) set themselves in array, and give a second charge upon my conscience too?

2. The reality of Repentance: for where God calls for sound repentance, (as Esay, 1. 16. *Wash*

Esa. 1:16

you, make you cleane, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to doe evil) there God doth promise, (vers. 18.) that

18.

Though our sins be as scarlet, yet they shall be white as snow; and though they be red like crimson, yet they shall be as wool: in which words are expressed a plaine change of the finfull condition; our finnes shall not be what, and as once they were.

Whereupon the soule misgives for its part: God will doe what he hath promised, if I had done what I was enjoyned. If my sins had been truly left, they had been fully discharged; but now I possess

Note:

fesse them againe in their guilt;
 and therefore I exceedingly feare
 that I did overtly discharge my
 selfe of them in my repentance. If
 Christ had slaine them by his
 bloud, or if I had drowned them
 by true sorrow and repentance,
 they could not thus revive in their
 guilt; but I feare that I did only
 skin over these sores, which I
 feele now to breake out, or that I
 laid them asleep only, and not
 dead, because they awake upon
 me with such terror and clamor;
 and if so, then there hath been a
 long and fruitlesse veine of rot-
 ten hypocrisie in me; and where-
 as I had thought my work almost
 finished, I am as yet to begin a-
 gaine: *Beloved*, this is a secret and
 piercing fountain of strong feares
 and doubtings, especially when
 the finnes rise up, and set on us a
 fresh after a course of humiliati-
 on; and some singular assurance
 of their pardon; and yet it is the
 case of many Christians, incident
 unto

unto them in their dayes of great
losses, or sicknesses, or death.

14 Another spring or occasion
may be some long silences in the
conscience. *A four-
teenth cause.*

God (you know) hath set in
our selves, our Law-giver, our
Judge, and our Witnesse; Con-
science doth sustaine, and should
discharge the offices of all these:
In a doubtfull day it should clear
our condition, and witnesse for
us against the testimony of Satan,
and of our own fears; and there-
fore God hath given unto it an
excusing and comforting power,
as you may see, Rom. 2. 15. Their
thoughts excusing one another, or ac-
cusing. And 2 Cor. 1. 12. Our re-
joycing in this, the testimony of our con-
science, that in simplicity and godly
sincerity, &c.

Here consider some particu-
lars:

1 Concerning Testi-
monie;

2 Concerning our Con-
dition;

1 There

A three-
fold testi-
mony.

1 Cor. 2. 12

* By assu-
rance.

I There is a three-fold testi-
mony about our estate; 1 One
is from the Spirit, which shines
in the renewed heart by an un-
speakable light, and manifests
unto it the things given unto it
of God, and so seals, and witness-
eth the truth and goodnesse of
our particular interests in God &
Christ, according to the word of
God. 2 Another is from faith,
which doth testifie the interests
of the soule in that happinesse
which it findes revealed in the
Word; for that which faith be-
lieves by a direct act in the Word,
it may testifie of the same to the
person by a reflexive * act. 3. A
third is from Conscience, which
beholding the simplicity and
godly sincerity of the heart, testi-
fies unto it (against all oppositi-
on) that this blessed frame is in
the soule; and this testimony be-
ing concordant with that of the
Word, the soule is thereby great-
ly sustained, forasmuch as this is
knowne before, viz. A sincere
temper

temper is happy; and now Conscience clearing that temper, the soule hereupon is much cheared.

2 Our condition falls under a three-fold consideration.

1 Sometimes under the accusations of Conscience; Conscience doth speake and testifie, but it is either that our hearts are totally base, and sinfull, and corrupt, or that in such and such a particular it is not right, it was not perfect, but sinfull, and degenerating.

A three-fold estate

2 Sometimes under the excusations of Conscience: where Conscience testifies, and acquits, and speakes peace, either about the frame of the heart, or rectitude of some particular action and course.

As in Paul, loc. cit.

As in David about Saul.

3 Sometimes under a neutrall act, or worke of the Conscience: (i.) The Conscience (like Absalom to Amnon, 2 Sam. 13. 22) speakes unto a person neither good nor bad: It doth not accuse him, nor doth it excuse him; it doth

doth not speak terrour, nor doth it speak peace; it doth not charge any speciall guilt, nor doth it give us a particular discharge of any.

Now this is the time of feares and doubts; I wil shew you why, because,

1 A negative state satisfies not a tender Christian: it doth not satisfie a tender soule, that God lookes not like an enemy, unlesse also he lookes as a friend; or that Conscience doth not check, but that it should excuse. It doth trouble us many times, that in our exemptions from trouble, we yet finde no Peace-speaker.

2 It gives suspition of a neutrall estate, because Conscience seemes to behave it selfe as a neutrall, neither against us, nor for us. I call that a neutrall estate, which is not eminently evill; it hath some good in it, and doth some good, but is not so good, as to be gracious, therefore the civill estate is a neutrall; it doth not

not rise to be so bad as the best,
nor to be so good as the best peo-
ple are. Now this estate (abso-
lutely considered) is bad, it is an
evill estate, it is an estate in which
if a man lives and dyes (and goes
not beyond it) he cannot be
saved.

3 It may breed an expectation
of the worse testimony of Con-
science; for with-drawments are
(sometimes) the fore-runners of
some bitter intentions: it fell out
ill with *Saul*, when God with-
drew himselfe from him: So
when Conscience with-drawes,
perhaps my Conscience hath
found matter against me, and as
it doth not now speake peace, so
(perhaps) shortly it may speake
bitter things unto me.

4 Nay, Conscience is Gods
Vice-gerent, it is his Deputy, and
therefore in the silences and with-
drawments of it, we looke
through, and feare the disposition
of God himselfe towards us, be-
cause the servants doe ordinarily
expresse

Conscience is the
looking-
glasse.

expresse the conceits, and inclinations, and affections of their masters; and this is certaine, that we doe in an angry conscience behold alwayes an angry God, and so in a cheerfull conscience a gracious God, and so shall we in a silent conscience suspect a doubtful God: We doe ordinarily judge how God is towards us by what we finde and feele Conscience to be towards us: This is the glasse in which wee see his favours or frownes.

These are the springs of doubtings, which I have enlarged in their opening unto you; it is likely there may bee more then these, (I could also deliver you more about the temporall estate; but that is out of our scope and compasse now.) It now remaines that I descend to the closing up of these springs, to the cures and remedies of these Doubtings, which is the last thing proposed.

CAP.

CHAP. V.

*The Cures and remedies of doubt-
ings.*

Here lies our next and greatest work, and therefore as Physicians in this part are more cautelous to administer things which are in their qualities most proper, and in their measures most convenient; so must we in the healings and closings of the spirituall distempers of the soule: And therefore that this worke may be happily performed, I shall (desiring Gods grace to assist and blesse) prescribe unto you, 1 The particular cures which shall answer all those particular springs of doubtings before mentioned. Then 2 The generall Cures and Remedies which may extend to the help of all, or most of our doubtings, if time and leasure hold out.

Two sorts
of cures,
Particular,
Generall.

The particular Cures.

The first
cure, an-
swering
the first
cause of
doubtings.

Rem. 8. 13

Simile.

2 Cor. 10. 3

2 Cor. 10. 3

2 Cor. 10. 3

2 Cor. 10. 3

Heb. 10. 22

1 Naturall corruption was the first spring of Doubtings, and Mortification is the first help and remedy: That is the Disease, and this is the Cure. I may say that of our faith, which the Apostle speakes of our persons, *Rem. 8. 13.* *If ye through the Spirit doe mortifie the deeds of the body, yee shall live.* The more our sins doe dye in us, the more our faith will live in us. We are diseased men (take us in our best condition) and you know the more any disease doth lose of its strength, the more doth our health rise up and thrive; and so we are as a garden which hath many plants, and severall weeds, the abating of these, the rooting up, and killing of these, contributes the greater reliefe and strengthening to our plants.

The Apostle (*Heb. 10. 22.*) would have them to draw neere with a true heart in full assurance of faith: he would have them to cast out

out their doubtings in their approaches unto God, he would have them to come with assurance, with a full assurance; to come so, as verily to be perswaded of Gods acceptance of them; not indifferently to come with, May be I shall be accepted, may be I shall not; this is a doubtfull approaching. But what doth he adjoyne to this exhortation? Observe the next words, *Having your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. q. d.* As long as your hearts are evil, as long as Conscience can charge you for entertained evil, you will be wavering and doubtfull; but if your hearts were sprinkled, if the evil of sin were washed from them, then you might come with a full assurance of faith (i.e.) Then faith might perswade you to come confidently unto God, for Faith cannot well perswade, if Conscience can yet truly charge and condemne.

Therefore saith St. John, *If our hearts condemne us not, then have we* 1 Joh. 3. 21

confidence towards God. (i.) If sinne be mortified, if Conscience findes no sin harboured, but condemned, if it cannot condemne us for not condemning our sinnes; then we have confidence towards God. (i.e.) Then if we come to God in prayer, and aske any thing of him in the Name of Christ, Faith may confidently rest upon it, that God doth heare, and will answer. *Whatsoever we*
 22. *aske, we receive of him, ver. 22.*

There are two effects of our sinnes.

Psal. 40. 12
 Two effects of sin.

1 They keep downe our faith. I am so troubled (saith David) that I cannot looke up. See the place, *Psal. 40. 12.* Innumerable evils have compassed me about; Mine iniquities have taken hold on me, so that I am not able to looke up; They are more then the haire of my head, therefore my heart faileth me. You see here that his sins made his heart to faile, to misgive it selfe; and like an hea-
 vie rheume they fell on his eyes, that he could not well looke up.

They

They are a hinderance to faith ; our naturall inclination is a very clog unto the spirit of faith ; and when faith would doe some good for us, it ever (like a malicious person) throwes in doubts and scruples, and breeds with-holding arguments, and reasonings against the Truths and Promises of God.

2 They make the incouragements of faith to be difficult ; By contraries reasonings and denials. they keep off the things, which would edge & quicken our faith.

As Peter said in another case, *Depart from me Lord, for I am a sinfull man* ; So the heart here, God is, or will depart from me, because I am such a sinner ; he will not heare my prayer, because of my sins ; nor be gracious to me, because of my sinnes ; nor may I pitch upon his Promises, because of my sins.

Now consider, if that which did keep down faith in respect of its proper inclination (for faith naturally bends upward) and in

respect of its operation, that it cannot exercise it selfe without interruption, were removed; would not faith be higher? If the chaine and bolts were off, if the rheume were dryed, should we not looke better? Againe, If the encouragements of faith were kept close to faith, if faith could not see them, and dwell upon them, would not our doubtings sinke? Therefore it is more then evident that our doubtings would sinke, if our natural corruption did sink, if our sinfull lusts did sink, which doe breed those indispositions, those interruptions, those continuall difficulties unto our faith. Faith would rise, if its contrary did abate. *Gen. 21. 10.* Cast out this bond-woman and her sonne, (saide Sarah to Abraham) for the sonne of this bond-woman shall not be heire with my sonne: So say I, cast out this bond-woman and her sonne, cast out naturall corruption and infidelity, that Isaac may be alone, that faith may be (as much as may be) alone, and

and then it will possesse the Promises (and the soule too) with more quietnesse.

But here the soule replies, No Object. question but doubtings would sinke, if sinfull corruption did fall; If the fountaine did decay, the streams would lessen; but alas, 1. Who can mortifie his sinfull nature? 2 What kind of mortifying of it is requisite? 3 What way may be taken to effect it?

I will briefly say something to each of these demands. Sol.

To the first, Who can mortifie his sinfull nature? I answer, Of himselfe, no man can; naturally he hath neither will nor power thereto: But as Ebrystome spake in the businesse of Repentance, Thou canst not turne thee, but yet thy God can turne thee; That I say here in the businesse of mortifying, Thou canst not mortifie thy sins, but God can doe it: He can doe it for thee, though thou canst not doe it for thy selfe,

Tu non potes, sed Dominus tuus potest.

though thy naturall corruption be a spreading Leprosie, he can heale it; though it be a violent Plague, he can cure it: God hath put enough in Christ to save a sinner, and therefore enough to heale a sinner. Remember one thing, In all commands, the duty is thine, and the power is Gods; he who commands thee to mortifie sin, is ready enough with sufficient power to effect it, if he be sought unto.

○ Nevertheless observe by the way, that Mortification may be effected two wayes; 1 Passively, as when the Lord doth infuse holy principles of Grace, which are contrary in their nature and vertue to the nature and power of sin, working out sinfull corruption by degrees. 2 Actively, as when the renewed and converted soul doth by faith successively apply, and draw downe the crucifying vertues of Jesus Christ; though the meere Naturall man can doe nothing to the mortification of
fin,

fin, yet the renewed person having received grace from God, is by the help of Gods Spirit to stir up the grace that is in him, and especially his faith, to trust on Jesus Christ for the further subduings and crucifyings of his sinfull nature.

2 But now for the second demand, What kind of Mortification is most requisite, so as in more measure to free the heart from doubtings? In a word, this; be sure the mortifying be

1 Radicall, lay the axe to the root: As all Graces thrive most, when their springs are quickned, so all sins decay most, when their roots are mortified. Corrupt acts will fall quickly, if a corrupt heart were more sanctified. The strength of sin is inward, there are the strong holds which need most to be cast downe: By all meanes set up a crucified Christ in thy bosome.

3 Impartiall; It is true, one sin may trouble more then another,

ther, but it will be thy wisdom
to trouble all sin: Sins are chain-
ed together as well as Graces;
and one sin serves to helpe ano-
ther, and the neglected sinne may
perhaps suddenly wound thee,
and make thee to stagger. The
whole body of sin in every mem-
ber of it, must be the object of
thy mortifying work: This will
testifie the truth of Grace recei-
ved, and the sincerity of thy con-
science, and consequently will
remove many bottomes of feares
and doubtings.

3 Diurnall; (i.) a daily work,
Perhaps sometimes thou art fer-
vent in the work, (when consci-
ence is struck, or when afflictions
strike thee) but afterwards thou
art negligent, and then sinne gets
strength againe. But as thou
should'st live by faith daily, so
thou shouldest dye to sin daily;
Watch thy spirit, resist the moti-
on of it, insist on divine promises,
implead the strength of Christ e-
very day: Thou shouldest so be-
leeve

leeve still, as if thou never yet hadst enough of Christ; and so live still, as if thou wert to live thy last; and so mortifie sin still, as thou didst at the first time wherein God looked on thee.

4 Speciall. If thou wouldst make thy battell strong in any part, doe it then against Infidelity, and whatsoever upholds and contributes unto it. It is granted, that the Radicall principle of thy doubts is originall sin: but then the immediate principle of it is remaining Infidelity. Out of it immediately come all thy staggerings, and reelings, and questionings, and doubtings: That is it, (O weak beleever) which disables thy apprehension of the Covenant, of Christ, of the Promises, of thy Title: That is it which perverts thy judgement, and mis-perswades it with cunning reasonings, so that either thou canst not discern the full truth of Gods Promises, or thou canst not see prevailing reasons to per-

perswade thy selfe that they belong to thee.

Therefore let the maine care and work of thee be, to strike at unbeliefe: Be humbled much for it, beseech the Lord to cure thee more and more of it, to remove the ignorance of the Covenant out of thee, and to cast down carnall and proud reasonings, which give the lye to the way of Gods free and full Grace. which would have thee to be first, and of thy selfe, that which thou canst never be without Christ: and to doe and bring that, which God never imposed on thee to doe or to bring, but hath told thee plainly, the working of it in thee belongs only to himselfe, and he is also really and graciously willing to bestow upon thee.

3 As for the third demand, What way thou mayst take for the mortifying of all this sinne; I answer,

1 Generally, touching all of it, Doe but insist in the wayes on which

which already thou art false;
Did any vertue in the death of
Christ (laid hold on by faith)
did that heretofore helpe against
sinne? It will doe so still: Did a-
ny love of God help thee the more
to hate sin? It will doe so still:
Did any assurance of a reconciled
God in Christ, freely and abun-
dantly pardoning of thee, weaken
sin in thee? It will doe so still:
Did solemne confessions of sinne,
selfe-judgings, speciall mourn-
ings, sufficiently helpe thee with
conquest of sins? They will doe
so still: Did the humble applica-
tion of thy selfe to the Ordinan-
ces of Jesus Christ (through
which he is pleased to reveale his
arme) confer any strength against
thy sins? It will help still: Did
any holy feare, any tenderesse in
Conscience, any declining of oc-
casions? Did vehement wra-
stlings with God in prayer? Did
serious meditation and confide-
ration? Did close society with
the Saints? Did studies of farther
holi-

holinesse? Did frequent review-
ings of thy condition, and renew-
ings of Covenant with thy God
in his strength? Did holy watch-
ings? Did resistings of the first
births of sin? Did these, any of
these, all of these, or any other
spirituall course besides these,
cause thy sinfulness to be vile un-
to thee, to be abhorred by thee, to
be cast downe in thy judgement,
to be cast out in thy affections, to
be cast off in thy life? Goe on
with these, & sin wil then be more
and more mortified, & doubts wil
be more and more weakned: the
more that thy conscience is thus
sprinkled from dead works, the
more shalt thou be able to draw
neare unto God in assurance of
faith.

2 Particularly, for the morti-
fying of remaining Infidelity, doe
three things:

1 Study exactly the Covenant
of Grace, in the Author of it,
foundation of it, matters contain-
ed in it, and all the adjuncts and
terms

termes of graciousnesse, sutable-
nesse, fulnesse, faithfulness, &c.
appertaining to it.

2. Study Jesus Christ through-
ly, know him distinctly as a Me-
diator, and offices, and effects, and
workes.

Then 3. To much meditati-
on in these, abound in Prayer,
that God in particular would
cause thee by faith to set thy seale
unto them: But more of this will
follow in answering some other
causes of doubtings.

2. The second Spring was weak-
nesse and imperfection in faith:
The cure and remedy of which is,
to perfect and strengthen faith;
put more strength, more growth,
more ripenesse into faith, and
your doubtings will be lesse. The *Simile.*
more purely the fire burnes, the
lesse smoke it hath; and when
the light and heat of the Sun is
greatest, then the clouds and misty
vapours are fewest.

2. Faith and Doubtings are like a
paire of scales, where the weight
of

of the one beares away the other. The Disciples I remember prayed, *Lord, increase our faith*; and so did hee of whom you heard in

Mar 9. 24. *Mark 9. Lord, help my unbelief.*

Object. You will say, No man can deny, that if his faith had more strength, then his heart should have lesse doubting; but how may that be done? How may faith be strengthened?

Sol.

I answer;

1 God who gave faith can strengthen it, for every grace depends upon him, not only for birth, but also for complement; his strength must lead us on from strength to strength, from faith to faith; he who is the Author, is also the finisher of it: And therefore if thou wouldst have a strong faith, thou shouldst go to a strong God, and beg of him, *Lord increase my faith*; my knowledge is dim, lighten that candle. open mine eyes yet more, that I may see thy truths; My assents many times shaking, but do thou establish and

con--

confirme my heart in thy truths ;
 my embracings, applications, ve⁶
 ry trembling, and broken, and in-
 terrupted, but do thou guide mine
 eye to look upon my Saviour, do
 thou guide my hand to lay hold
 on him, doe thou enable my wil
 and affections to embrace all
 the goodnesse of thy selfe, of thy
 Christ, of thy Word.

Doe thou
 perswade
 me, and I
 shall be
 perswaded

It is Gods method to lay in
 (at the first) weak faith, that we
 might beg for more faith, and
 give him the honour of all. Had
 we it strong at first, he should not
 heare of us ; but he dispenseth it
 by degrees, that in all our get-
 tings, and in all our victories o-
 ver doubtings, &c. his strength
 may have the glory. Therefore
 goe to God, and say, Lord, I
 would have more faith, thou
 wouldst have me to perfect it, but
 all perfection is in thee, and I
 cannot by my meere strength ri-
 pen what thou givest, but thou
 canst water what thou plantest ;
 though it bee sowne a weake
 body,

body, yet thou canst make it rise a strong body; though faith at first be but as a graine of mustard-seed, yet thou canst cause it to blossome, and to spread it selfe into a high measure; therefore thou who alone canst doe it, doe it for thy weak servant: Thou must take charge of thine own graces, and if thou givest my faith more strength, my beleeving will bring thee in the more glory, &c.

2 Thy studying of Christ and the Promises more, will bring more strength and perfection to faith. It is with the Christian as it is with the Schollar, let the Schollar study more the objects of knowledge, and then his knowledge will grow to be more large; So let the Christian study more the matters of faith, and his faith will rise to be more full.

Simile,

Hence the Apostle prays that Ephes. 3. 19. the Ephesians, Chap. 3. 19. might know the love of Christ, that they might be filled with all the faithfulness of God; and ver. 17. That Christ might dwell

dwell in their hearts by faith, that so they might be able, ver. 18. to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height.

What the Prophet spake of pe- Hos. 4, 6.
 rishing, we may say of fainting,
 and doubting. *My people doubt for want of knowledge.* Did we know the nature of our Redeemer more, how holy, and compassionate, and helpfull it is; did we know the offices of our Saviour, how absolute they are in removing our guilt, in conquering our corruptions, in making way for us to the Father, in speeding our suits and requests; did we know how fully he stands for us, he dyed for us, he intercedes for us, how willing he is yet to be more applyed by us, and possessed of us, we would beleeve more, and doubt lesse. What the Psalmist speaks of God, that same is true of Christ, *They that know thy name will put their trust in thee.* psal. 10.

Yet take a caution in thy studying

Note.

A mighty
Saviour
and graci-
ous.

ing of Christ, study him as God reveales him, otherwise thy doubts will stick upon thee; If a man studieth his sins in his owne way, in a naturall way, he shall neither rightly see them, nor yet be freed from them : So if men study Christ their owne way, if they will have him to be such a one as their feareful hearts would make him to be, and not such a Saviour as God hath manifested him to be, then not conceiving of Christ as he is, they shall be & remaine still as they were.

3 Be in the wayes of strength. There are wayes in which God doth reveale his arme; his arme is that which doth strengthen us, and his arme is revealed in his ordinances; for God doth not call us, nor change us, nor strengthen us, nor save us without meanes.

Note. He who is too good for the Ordinances, will ever be too weak in his faith. A childe which cannot stand when it is borne, may yet goe by the use of the breasts; but

but that person who is weak, and wants strength, if he feeds not, will abate more, and ere long want life it selfe. This is a truth, A new Christian is sometimes full, and a full Christian is alwayes weak; for our spirituall life is like unto our naturall life, both of which are within us, yet neither of them doe rise, but from something without us.

Spirituall
life like
the natu-
rall.

What the impotent person spake, *Joh. 5. 11.* *He that made mee* *Ioh. 5. 11.* whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed and walke; that we affirme of Gods Ordinances, those his meanes which made us good, can make us better; they made us live, and they can make us walke; they gave faith, they brought the hand which did set the plant, and they can enlarge faith, they bring the showres which doe water that plant:

For 1 They evidence Christ more, and open and unfold the Promises (which are the staves of our faith) more.

2 They

God can
answer
that in one
Sermon,
which hath
troubled
us more
then one
yeare.

12 They enervate, or weaken,
and scatter the grounds of our
feares and doubtings, and excee-
dingly suppress the reasonings
and powers of unbelieve.

13 They cleare the understand-
ing, and so keep open the way for
faith to God and Christ.

14 They doe instill a seerer and
drawing vertue, they doe excite,
and quicken, and perswade,

Ergo.

Fourthly, let faith know its
priviledges, and then it wil grow
more strong: Faith would doe
more, if it did know all that it
might doe; assuredly we should
have more confidence, did wee
know our royalties.

Belcevers are more to God then
the most immediate servants are
to a Prince; all the Subjects of a
Prince have some priviledges, yet
theirs are greatest, who are in
nearest service; now none nearer
to God then Belcevers; see 1 Pet.
2. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a
royall Priest-hood, an holy Nation, a*

pecu-

pecu-

peculiar people; Nay, 2 Cor. 6. 18.
I will be my Father and Mother,
said the Lord Almighty; and these
 have those priviledges which the
 servants have not. They who de-
 scended from the blood of *Abra-*
ham, had more priviledges then o-
 thers, and have not they greater,
 who come from the blood of
 Christ? The Priests of the Law
 had singular exemptions, and
 Kings of all men are most highly
 priviledged; doe you think Be-
 leevvers come short, who are not
 profane, nor civill, nor typicall
 Priests, but royall Priests? who
 are not Priests only, nor Kings
 only, but both Kings and Priests,
 a royall Priest-hood? who are a
 holy Nation, a peculiar people,
 (i. e.) a people of treasure, such
 by whom only God gets some-
 thing?

O, say many weak Beleevers, Object.
 The Lord doth not respect nor
 love us.

No? Doth not God love those,
 whom (out of his meere love)

Sol.

he

he hath chosen? Doth not God respect the descent, and generation of Christ? those who come of his blood? They who come from Christ, and are borne of God, are surely beloved of God.

Object. But in the world, all men discountenance us, and regard us not.

Sol. Yee are Kings in Gods account, yee have the royall oyntment, even the Spirit of Grace; the royall garment, even the righteousness of Christ; the royall attendance, even the Angels of God ministering unto you. You have a Kingdome which consists in righteousness, and peace, and joy, *Rom. 14. 17.* Cannot this stir up faith?

Object. Wee are oft-times afraid to come before God, we feare access.

Sol. Are ye not Beleevers? And are not Beleevers the Priests of God? And are not Priests priviledged by their calling to come before God? *The Priests might enter in, when none else might.* And is not
Jesus

Jesus Christ the Altar, upon which we tender all our sacrifices and services to God? and is it not the Altar that Sanctifies the gift? *Matth. 23. 19.* The Apostle saith, *Mat. 23. 19*
Gal. 5. 1. that Christ hath gotten us a liberty; and *Ephes. 2. 13.* that we are made nigh by the blood of Christ; *Eph. 2. 13*
 and *Heb. 10. 19.* that we may have boldnesse to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. *Heb. 10. 19*

If therefore wee did once thoroughly know what priviledges the first-borne have, the Sons of God have, the Generation of Christ have, the Priests of God have, the purchased by Christ have; if we knew the grants of favour, and free accesses, and singular acceptances with God, in and through Christ, O how might we keep down our feares, and our doubtings, and singularly encourage our faith to run, and with fullest eagerneffe to embrace our God, our Christ, our Promises!

That
 1. Gods
 1. Love is ready.
 2. Eare open.
 2. Access made.
 3. Special Intercessions.
 4. Imperfections nothing.
 5. Grants certaine.

There be other meanes for the

G

per-

perfecting of faith, as, Experiences, Observation, &c. which I have touched long since, and our Divines are plentiful this way, and therefore I spare.

3 The third spring of doubtings was, the study of the life of sense; the remedy of which, is the keeping of it downe: If you will keep off doubtings, you must keep down sense and feeling. Blessed (saith Christ to Thomas, Job. 1oh. 20. 29.) are they that have not seen and yet have beleevd.

If a man thinks this, That Christ is not mine, unlesse I handle him; and God is not mine, unlesse I see him; and grace is not mine, unlesse I feele it; hee will be for ever full of doubts and feares.

For the helping of which, consider these things.

1 Sense is not a fit Judge of our condition; it cannot report our estate but by what it fees: but the spirituall estate is not alwayes under feeling; we should be

be good and bad, found and lost, cheerfull and sorrowfull, many times in one day, nay in one houre, if that sense gave sentence on our condition.

Beloved, thinke well on this ; There is How can sense reach unto the not a lati-
times of desertion? unto the tude in
times of want? unto the times of sense.
indisposition? unto the times As a rich
where faith doth expresse no acts, mans hand
but such as are pure and cleare, cannot
and only grounded upon the hold all
Promises? In these distracted his lands,
times Sense findes nothing to so a Chri-
speake to us, to evidence for us, stians sense
for God holds off, and wants cannot
hold up, and dulnesses hold in, comprehend all
and we have nothing but a word his condi-
of promise (all other things seem tion.
to faile and forsake) to sustaine
and retaine us.

2 The spirituall course many times goes against our sense, and therefore sense must be kept downe. You know that Abraham against hope beleeved in hope, Rom. 4. 18. Faith and sense are Rom. 4. 18

many times at a contradiction ;
 faith will beleve what sense per-
 ceiveth not ; and what our sense
 doth perceive, that same our
 faith will not beleve, but the
 contrary. *Though he kill me, yet will*
I trust in him, saith *Job* ; and *A-*
brabam beleved his sons safety, in
 the sacrificing of him ; and wee
 our immortality, notwithstanding
 our death and corruption. This is very certaine, that when
 we feele corruptions living, faith
 will beleve them to be dying ;
 and when we feele our selves in
 trouble, faith will then beleve
 our comforts and deliverances :
 Faith usually (I doe not say al-
 wayes) beleeves the contraries
 unto sense.
 For sense goes our way ; and
 faith goes Gods way : Sense al-
 lowes and sets it selfe a time, and
 Faith is content to receive and
 take Gods times ; Sense moves
 upon what appears, and Faith
 upon what is not yet : Sense looks
 downward, and Faith lookes up-
 ward ;

For your
 wayes are
 10. my

waies, &c.
 As the bea-
 vens, &c.

Isa. 55.
 My times
 are in thy
 hands

Pla. 31. 15
 Heb. 11. 1

The evi-
 dence of
 things not
 seene.

2 Chron.
 20. 12

We know
 not what so
 doe, but our
 eyes are up-
 on thee.

ward; Sense doth sustaine it selfe by something within us, and Faith sustaines it selfe by something without us, Psal. 27. 3. So Hab. 3. 17, 18. So Esay 8. 17. I will wait upon the Lord that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will looke for him, Esay 50. 10. Who is he that walketh in darknesse, and hath no light? Let him trust in the Name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.

3 Sense or feeling is not *medium credendi*, but *fructus fidei*; (i. e.) It is not the ground of beleeving, but a fruit of faith. v. g. Take feeling in the most excellent parts of it, as in assurance, and joy, and peace, these are not Antecedents to faith, but Consequents of it. What is that? That is, a man hath not these first, and then faith for or from these, but hee hath faith first, and these afterward.

Why dost thou not beleieve?

If I had assurance that God were my God, and Christ were my Christ, and the Promises were

mine, I would : But say, Is the Word or thy Assurance the ground of faith? and wouldst thou have the fruit before the tree? or thy safety before thou

Eph. 1. 13.

After yee
beleeved, ye
were sealed.

1 Pet. 1. 8.

In whom
though now
ye see him
not, yet be-
leeving, ye
rejoyce
with joy
unspeak-
able, &c.

layest hand on the rock? If thou wouldst have assurance, thou must then beleeve; for the sweetnesse of assurance flowes from that faith which by beleeving seeds on Christ. So if thou wouldst have joy, beleeve; for true joy doth not prevent, but attend beleeving.

We are oft times troubled by our owne pride and folly; God sets us a way to beleeve, and we will follow our owne way; Hee gives unto us his Word of Promise to ground our beleeving, and we will have our sense to be the ground: Of which course, I dare say, what *Abraham* spake to the curiosity of *Dives*, who would have some to bee sent from the dead, that his brethren might beleeve; to whom *Abraham* thus replies, *If they beare not Moses and the*

the Prophets, neither will they be
perswaded though one rose from the
dead, Luk. 16. 31.

Luk. 16. 31

So say I, If men will not be-
leeve, because God hath promised,
neither will they beleeve, if sense
should stand up and speake; for
we have more reason to suspect
our own testimony, then to dis-
trust Gods invitation and pro-
mise.

You will reply, This testimony **Object.**
of sense in Assurance is Gods
owne answer, and therefore if we
had it, it would the more settle
our faith.

I answer,

I Gods testimonies are indeed **Sol.**
of a settling and quieting vertue,
whether they be the evidencing
of our present interests in him, or
speciall answerings of our pre-
sent desires.

3 But then know, thou must
first put to thy seale and hand of
faith, before he delivers over to
thee the assuring Evidences. And
as yet I never knew any Christian

who could be answered without faith, or tooke comfort in that which yet he did not beleeeve. For though it be the favour of God which doth properly comfort, neverthelesse it doth not actually comfort, unlesse faith hath taken in that favour.

Object. But are not former experiences (which are nothing else but sensible feelings) grounds to future beleefe? Did not *David* remember the dayes of old?

Sol. I answer, True, Experiences are good encouragements to the future acts of faith, but the Word of God is still the ground of faith: They are not intrinsecall grounds, but extrinsecall motives.

Note. You may consider the experiences, either in things granted and performed, or in the manner of their performance. Thou hast had Gods favour, thou hast had an answer, but how didst thou obtaine them? was it not by beleeeving? was it not by waiting upon
some

some good word of promise? Thy injoying of them did not prevent thy beleeving of the word of Promise, but the believing of that word of Promise did let in, and bring unto thy soule that sweet and gracious experience; and therefore thy experience was not the ground heretofore, nor is it now; only thus farre it serves as a singular furtherance to faith, that that God, on whom heretofore thou didst beleeve, and from whom (in beleeving) thou receivedst such gracious helps and answers, will againe (he being the same for ever, and his Promises being *Yea* and *Amen*) by further beleeving on his Word, renew his gracious goodnesse and mercifull favour unto thy soul.

4. A fourth spring was, the restraining of faith, the curbing of it in its worke, and in occasions. Now the remedy of this is, to give way unto faith; give it scope, let it doe its whole service, as the Apostle said of patience,

G 5.

Jam.

Jam. 1. 4. Jam. 1. 4. Let patience have her perfect worke, so let faith; doe not reſtraine it, and then you ſhall be ſtayed, you ſhall be freed: The workings of one contrary reſtraine the other.

Therefore Chriſt checks his Diſciples for their anxieties, for their carkings, and ſolicitudes, and would have them to let their faith looſe to ſee a Father who would provide, Mat. 6. 32. They had poverty, or feared it; their wants came in, and loſſes, and ſo their fears came in, and thoughts. But how ſhould they caſt them out? Thus: If faith did beleieve helps, as well as impatience finde wants; if they would give way to faith to beleieve Gods providing, as well as ſenſe to ſee the World abridging & ebbing, they would not have been ſo full of thoughts: *Shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?* ver. 30.

Three
things
here.

But for the further help in this point, conſider,

1 In any occurrence, Faith may be

be our Agent, it can deale for us, because 1. Our temporall life is by faith; 2. The temporall Promises which reach over all the externall condition, are the bottom of faith. Hence it is said, *Hab. 2. 5. The just shall live by his faith.* When we have no other help, yet faith can be our staffe; when we have no other feeding, yet faith can be our bread: It can negotiate for the soul, it can make repaire to God, and singularly so- lace and sustaine the soule in his word of Promise.

Suppose a mans meanes begin to shrink, his condition is drawing thin, he is neare to want, at such a time this man may keepe downe his doubts, and tearing thoughts, if he will give faith a scope to work: *I will never leave thee nor forsake thee, Heb. 13. 5.* Here Heb. 13. 5. is a Promise now, and here is plenty enough to faith; and faith (if it may have its perfect worke) will sustaine thee against all doubtings.

Object. I shall be left, sayest thou.

Sol. Thou shalt not, saith Faith.

Object. Not now, perhaps, for yet I have something.

Sol. Nay, never saith faith, for thou hast a continuall God, and hee hath promised a continuall help.

*Psal. 9. 10
They, &c.
for thou
Lord hast
not forsaken
them that
seek thee.*

Thou wouldst be a free-man, if faith were free, for faith will not leave God, and God will not faile faith; and why shouldst thou fail, when faith holds up thy heart, and God holds up thy faith?

So for any crosse and trouble; Not any burthen this way, but faith may be a shoulder to ease us: As long as there is a Promise to beare up faith, faith will have strength to bear off the disquietments of our troubles.

Object. I know not what to doe, saith, the person.

Sol. No? saith Faith, Is not the Lord good, a strong hold in the day of trouble, and doth not he know them

Nah. 1. 7

Object. that trust in him? Nahum. 1. 7.

*Gods arme
is not
shortened.*

But troubles are renewed, and come againe; and though I was deli-

delivered heretofore, yet now I feare.

Feare? faith faith, No reason Sol.
for that. See a notable place, *Job. 5.* *Iob 5. 17.*

17. *Happy is the man whom God correcteth. If a man hath wounds, it is well for him to have a searching plaster: and if a man hath a full stomach, it is well for him if he hath a potion; and if his spirits putrifie, it is well for him to be let blood: So, &c.*

18. *For he maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and his bands make whole.*

18.

19. *He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea in seaven there shall no evil touch thee.*

19.

There is nothing new to God, nor difficult. Though our troubles be grievous to us, yet their deliverance is easie to God, and faith can finde a harbour for every storme; yea, give faith but its scope, it will conclude present helps from former deliverances; and the escape out of old troubles, shall ensure faith in the new:

He

He who hath delivered, doth, and will still deliver, 2 Cor. 1.

God doth not alter, neither in his truth, nor in his goodnesse, nor in his power, although our conditions doe vary: The temptation may be new, and affliction new, but God is still the same, and the Promises the same, and faith can make use of one God to conquer twenty temptations, and one Promise to beare up against many afflictions.

2 In every occurrence there is a providence, and the issues depend upon it. If Satan tempts, if afflictions, and crosses, and losses, and contempts befall us, there is a Providence to permit them, to order them, to direct them, to restrain them; and if we gave faith a scope to work upon that Providence, we would not be so full of doubts.

1 For Satan, he doth indeed tempt and suggest, but he cannot doe this when he pleaseth, he must aske leave of God to touch Job any

any way : And when hee doth tempt, the issue doth not depend upon his malice ; the Lord looks on, and subministers marvellous strength, and makes his servants to pray earnestly, and heare earnestly, and apply his Promises, and will deliver.

But his actions, and the issues of them are subordinate and under-restrained.

Note.

We looke upon Satan, and not upon God ; we look upon strong temptations, but we look not upon mighty assistances ; we consider our owne weaknesse, but doe not consider Gods omnipotency ; we think how unable we are, but not how able God is ; we finde yet no deliverance, and doe not give faith its perfect work, to beleeve that God will finde a way to conquer for us. If faith did but dwell upon Gods providence in this, how he suffers Satan to buffet us, and how his grace is sufficient for us, and how his power will be made manifest in weaknesse ; how he hath delivered, and doth in our very resistance deliver us, and hath promised to
bruise

In God is my trust, I will not feare what man can doe unto me, said David. **bruise Satan under our feet; we would not doubt, we would not gratifie Satan with feares of fainting, but resist him stedfastly, by encouraging our selves in our God.**

So here,
&c.

He is in Egypt, & in the fiery fornace and in the prisons,
&c.

2 For our crosses and losses There is a providence in them, God is in all our troubles and wants: His wisdom is there, and his goodnesse: O how shall I be delivered? How? Let faith work, and that will tell thee how. Why should I thus be troubled? why? Let faith work, and that will tell thee; it is in *very faithfulness*, saith David: And, *It is good for me that I am afflicted.* No childe of God thus! Nay, let faith work, and it will cleare all; That a good condition is not exempted from afflictions, and that though God had one Sonne without sin, yet he had no Son without sorrow.

3 Our encouragements are more then our discouragements, and our helps exceed our oppositions; therefore faith is not to be restrained.

The

The Prophet healed up his
servants doubtings, 2 King. 6. 16. 2 Kin. 6. 16.
Feare not, for they that be with us are *Elishaes*
more then they that be with them. *servant.*

And so Christ to his perplexed Christ to
and doubting Disciples about his Disci-
those exigencies and casualties to ples.

which they were exposed; Feare A King-
not little flocke, it is your Fathers plea- dome op-
sure to give you a kingdome. q. d. Be posed to
not so disquieted, so anxious for temporall
your lives, for your safeties. *safety.*

Though you be a flock, and a lit-
tle flock, and the wolves are ma-
ny, yet let the worst come to the
worst, you shall have a Kingdom.
Oppose that to this, and you
need not doubt and feare.

So St. John, 1 Joh. 4. 4. Ye are 1 Joh. 4. 4.
of God (little children) and have o- Gods Spi-
vercome them, because greater is bee rit oppo-
that is in you, then he that is in the sed to Si-
world. *tans and*
Antichrist.

Once more St. Paul, Rom. 5. 20. Rom. 5. 20
Where sinne abounded, grace did much Grace op-
more abound; and 21. As sinne posed to
reigned unto death, so grace reignes sin.
through righteousness, unto eternall
life,

life by *Jesus Christ our Lord.*

So againe for outward troubles,

Esa. 41. 14 *Esay 14. 14. Feare not thou worme*
Help to *Jacob, (q. d. Thou art a weake*
trouble & *creature, contemptible creature,*
weakness. *a worme, yet thou art Jacob, and*
And 2 Cor. *therefore feare not) for I will helpe*
1.5. As the *thee, saith the Lord. Though Jacob*
sufferings *be weak, yet the God of Jacob is*
of Christ *strong.*
abound in
us, so our
consolation
also, &c.

2 Cor. 4. 17 *So for outward losses, 2 Chron.*
Our light *25. 9. said Amaziah to the man of*
afflictions, *God, But what shall we doe for the*
&c. work *hundred talents which I have given to*
for us a far *the Army of Israel? The man of*
more ex- *God answered, The Lord is able to*
ceeding *give thee much more then this.*
weight of
glory.

My Father *From all which we see, that*
is greater *Faith hath the better grounds to*
then all, *rest on; there are more with faith*
saith *then against it, for none can bee*
Christ. *against it, except the evill crea-*
tures, and he who is for it, is the
mighty Creator; all his power,
and his goodnesse, and his Christ,
and his Spirit, and his Word of
Truth is for it: He is greater then
all, so that faith may have singu-
lar

last matter to work upon in all occurrences.

It is on the better side, and on the greater side, on that side which will carry it, and bear down the contrary.

Satan is against me. Object.

But greater is he (that Spirit of Christ) in me, then he that is in the world. Sol.

Sin is against me. Object.

But greater is Christ who is for me, then sinne which is in me. Grace hath much more abounded. Sol.

Men in their power are against mee. Object.

But greater is that Almighty God, before whom the Nations are but as the drop of the bucket, and lighter then a dust in the balance. Sol.

Troubles are upon me. Object.

But my comforts are greater then my sorrowes, and the glory which I expect, infinitely exceeds the trouble which I suffer. Sol.

Wants are upon me. Object.

But

Sol.

But my supplies are exceeding;
I have a provident Father; and
though I have not a large portion
of earth, yet I have a sure King-
dome in heaven.

Note.

Beloved, if we would but often
consider of this, that faith is still
on the better, on the surer side,
we would quit all our doubtings;
we would not feare what man
can do unto us, what Satan can do
unto us; our owne infirmities
would not disable us, nor afflicti-
ons; for still faith falls to the su-
rest party, and therefore give it
scope. Faith pitcheth upon no
weak causes, upon no weak helps,
upon no weak stayes; it stayes up-
on the Name of the God of Jacob.

O how might faith out-face
the greatest oppositions, & tram-
ple under all our affronts, and
losses, and doubts, if we did let it
get out unto its encouragements,
could we once come with faith to
be perswaded indeed, that they
who are so for us, are more then
they who are against us!

Bre-

Brethren, in our Spirituall combats we have the better cause, and the better strength; what help heaven can afford, we have. Therefore in all our distresses let us hearten our selves, and encourage our faith: Let us (as *Jebu* in another case) looke up, and say, *Who is on my side, who?* and then we may even say what the Psalmist spake, *Psal. 124. 1. If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may (the Beleever) Israel say,* 2. *If it had not been the Lord,* &c. 7. *Our soule is escaped as a bird out of the snare; &c.* 8. *Our help is in the name of the Lord, &c.* Psa. 124. 1.
2.
7.
8.

5 A fifth spring of doubtings, was speciall and particular sins after conversion: These, like a strong disease, doe shake the very heart and spirit of the Christian, and stagger him on every side; and like a cloud, fold up all our comfortable communion with God; like a dead fly they fall in to all our services. *If thou dost ill,* sinne lyes at the doore, said God to *Cain:*

Cain : And so you shall finde it, that speciall sins after conversion doe much interrupt us in our approaches, and in our confidences.

Now the way to Cure this spring, is,

David.

1 To renew our sorrower, to set open the fountaine: *David* did so after his great sins, and so did

Peter.

Peter; the one did water his couch, and his teares were his meat day and night, and the other went out and wept bitterly.

Bitternes,
what it
imports.

1. Anguish.

Bitternesse of sorrow (you read of it in *Zach.* 12. 10.) imports;

1. An anguish of spirit; as *David* said for his *Jonathab*, My soule is distressed for thee; so here the false Christian is distressed for sinning thus against his God, for losing his God; there is oft-times a very tearing and rending in the soule.

2. Fulness
of griefe.

2. A sensible fulnesse of griefe; as *Ioseph* was full of compassion, and his bowels could hold no longer upon the oration of *Judab*; so

so the false Christian is full of holy meltings, his heart is ready to break, and like a full vessell it must have vent.

Many a time he must, and doth consider this vile sinne, and hies him alone to poure out his grieved heart before the Lord, and shames himselfe before him, and confesseth with confusion of face his treacherous and unworthy dealing against his God.

There is, you know, a naturall Three sorrow, as for the losse of Children, and a Politicall sorrow, as was that for the good King *Jehoshaphat*, and there is a spirituall sorrow, which is for our sins: This must now be exceedingly renewed, and you may raise it by consideration of mercy. O Lord, what have I done? Why have I done this? Thou shewedst me mercy in opening my eyes, in changing my heart, in calling me to holinesse, in pardoning of former sins; yet after all this, I have sinned against thee, I have wounded my heart,

How to
raise our
sorrow.

heart, dishonoured thy Name, turned thy grace into wantonnesse, lost thy favour, broke my peace, injured my Christ, grieved thy Spirit, turned away thine care, given advantage to Satan, and deserved for ever to sit in darknesse, &c. Beloved, if you finde your hearts unhumbled, you shall finde your hearts still to be unbelieving.

Not. For besides that, great sins are great provocations to our gracious God, they are also (till we are humbled for them) great impediments to faith; faith cannot doe service for us, it cannot uphold us, it cannot bring a comforting promise unto our hearts, untill our hearts are humbled for our sins. God comforts none but mourners; and faith cannot fall in with him, untill our hearts fall out with our selves.

And here take heed you be not sleight and too quick; if you be, you shall have your doubtings againe. God doth seldome or
never

never speake easie peace after a great sin. If you skin up a sore, it will breake out againe; if your sorrowes be not deep and sound, your feares will be fresh and multiplied; but let them be pious, and serious, and then the soule will after a while recover it selfe, and plead, and finde mercy with God, and be able to answer and silence all the doubtfull reasonings, which wil rise against faith in its wonted communions and applications.

But you will say, If we should sorrow thus, yet we should still doubt of mercy and Gods favour.

I answer,

I Thou hast now to answer thy doubtings; True, I did sin thus, but I have truly grieved for this sin; and though I might not apply mercy because I sinned, yet now I may, because I am grieved.

Sol.

A great current wil bear down the dam, and true sorrow will carry away our doubtings.

See Gods disposition to Abraham, Jer. 31. 18. I have surely

Jer. 31. 18

H

heard

- heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, &c.
 19. ver. 19, I was ashamed, yea even confounded, because I did beare the reproach of my youth. But then, ver. 20.
 20. Is Ephraim my deare sonne? Is he a pleasant child? for since I spake against him, I doe earnestly remember him still, therefore my bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the Lord.

The Father likes
 the Sons
 submission
 though
 not his
 rebellions.

And hee
 will
 not
 cast
 away
 his
 people.

Though God be offended with our sins, yet he is delighted in our sorrowes; and nothing melts him more, then to see us come melting before him. The mournfull behaviour of Josephs brethren moved him, and the returning Prodigals falling downe to his Father, and cryings out, went to the heart of him; and it is not without cause that David prayes, *Regard my teares that fall; and, Are not my teares registred? And, Put thou my teares into thy bottle. Melting teares doe melt a tender God and Father.*

2. To renew our repentance;
 in which I would comprehend both

both detestations and forsakings. These finnes must be made very hatefull to the soule, you must imbitter them, you must purge out all the sweetnesse of them, all the liking of them; Nay you must set upon them as on things most abominable. Hence that phrase of *loathing your abominations*, Ezek. 36.

St. John, Rev. 2. 5. adviseth decayed Ephesus to remember from whence she was false, and to repent. Beloved, this is not a condition to stay in; this water is deep, and drowning is possible, if we lye in it; But if we rise out of our sins, then our doubtings will fall. It is with our Consciences, as it is with water in a pot; if you put no fire under it, it is quiet; but if you kindle a fire, the water will boyle and bubble, it hath no quiet; So though Conscience be quiet and kind, and molests us not, if yet fire come under, if any notable sin come in, and kindle in the heart; now the boylings,

Ezek. 36

Rev. 2. 5

Simile.

now the feares and doubts of the soule.

And in these tumblings, the way to cease them, is to remove the fire, and then you shall see how the water growes to a Rillnesse againe, and by degrees leaves fuming: So will our soules come to a pacified temper, to a settlednesse, if once our sins be removed; leave the sins, and ordinarily the doubts will leave the sinner.

The sea
will be
calme, if
the winds
cease.

Play 1. 16.
17. Cease to
doe evill,
learne to
doe well.

18. Come
now and
let us rea-
son toge-
ther, &c.

For as sin is our unquiet sea, so repentance is our secure harbour: Any knowne sin unrepented, still puts in, and inflames doubts in us; but repentance plucks out the venome, and the rage. An amended childe comes againe before his Father, and a reformed Christian and penitent, may yet be confident.

* Loc. cit.

3 Sue out a speciall assurance: You may see by Davids disposi-
tion, after his speciall sins, that a generall acquittance would not serve the turne; for speciall sinnes you must sue out speciall assurance of pardon.

Your

1 Your Consciences will never be quiet else; Nay this will not satisfie thee, that yet they are pardonable, that they are such as do not exclude thee out of the Proclamation; thou wilt never be quiet untill God speakes peace, untill he doth put his seale to acquit thee of particular sins.

Sin will rise, it will lye uppermost, thou shalt feele it so, it will flye in thy face, it will come up in serious times, untill thou repent of it, and sue out thy discharge; therefore be earnest with the Lord for pardon of it, for a speciall acquittance: If the Lord Jesus did seale his blood upon thy heart, thy doubtings would cease.

But you will say, There is now no hope, though we should grieve, though we should repent, though wee should sue for pardoning mercy, there is now no hope; for these are sins after conversion, and they are great ones too; and besides we finde no particular promise to ease our soules upon.

Object.

H 3,

Let

Sol. Let me answer this doubt fully, for it is a folded one; there are many in it; consider therefore;

Three things. The promise of pardon is indefinite to repentance, and I beseech you marke this point: God doth not say, I will pardon sins simply, but if men repent and forsake sins, they shall have mercy. So againe, in promising pardon to repentance, he doth not promise it respectively, and conditionally, but absolutely and fully.

What is that? That is, God doth not say, If you repent of such or such sins, then you shall have pardon; but he saith simply and absolutely, If you repent; So that let the finnes be never so great, never so many, yet if they be sins of which thou now truly repentest, they are assuredly pardoned.

Esa. 55. 7. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him returne unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon

upon him, and to our God, for hee will abundantly pardon. Here you see a promise of abundant pardon to be made unto the penitent; though he hath had thoughts, though he hath had wayes, yet if he forsakes them, the Lord will pardon, and shew mercy.

Againe, because that pardon is promised to actuall repentance indefinitely, therefore let the sinner be what he will, let him be a person who was not converted before, or let him be a person already converted, yet if he begins true repentance, or the other renews his true repentance, they shall be pardoned: And the reason is, because it is not sinne simply in such an estate which God pardons, but it is sin repented of, which God doth promise to pardon: And therefore if an evill man, whose life hath been a course of sins, repents and leaves his sins, hee shall have mercy: Or if a good man fall accidentally into sinne, upon his repen-

tance he may confidently plead out Gods promises of pardon, for he shall have mercy upon his repentance, as you may see, Prov.

Pro. 28. 14. 28. 14. He that forsakes his sins, shall
Eze. 18. 32 finde mercy, Ezek. 18. 32. Turne
ver. 21, 22. your selves, and live. See ver. 21, 22.

If the wicked will turne from all his
sins, they shall not be mentioned unto
him.

Simile.

Whence we may infer, that if
God will forgive his enemies, he
will then (upon the same repen-
tance) forgive his children. If a
King will pardon a returning
Traitor, will he not receive then
a returning sonne? It was a pi-
ous speech of St. Chrysostome, *Si
Deus promittat graviam nobis offen-
dentibus, quid faciet nobis penitenti-
bus?* If he promisseth grace unto
us when wee are sinning, what
then will he confer on us, if we be
repenting?

2 Christ is of great vertue still,
and as able to put away the sins
after conversion, as well as be-
fore; therefore hee is called the
same,

same, yesterday, to day, and for ever: Heb. 13. 8.

And the Apostle reasons it in the Romans, *If when we were enemies,* Rom. 5. 10 *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, how much more being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?*

We must think of the pacification by Christ, of the atonement, of the propitiation of the satisfaction, not as confined to any one sinne, or to any one estate, but in respect of its sufficiency, reaching over both estates, and all the finnes in both. What is that? That is, the death of the Lord Jesus was not only to reach the sins thou didst commit in thy unconverted estate; and the rest afterward in thy converted estate, thou art to satisfie for by thine owne power some other way. What is this but that Popish leaven? that selfe-justification? those humane satisfactions? What is this but to divide our salvation 'twixt Christ and our selves? What is this but to restraints either the sufficiency,

or the efficacy of his death?

Christ a
pillar of
cloud, and
a pillar of
fire.

No, Christ is unto us in respect of sins before, and sins after conversion, as the Lord was to the *Israelites*, a pillar of a cloud, and a pillar of fire, Jesus Christ is a cloud in the day, (in the time of conversion) to cover our sins upon our repentance; and a pillar of fire by night, (for the times of former darknesse) upon our repentance to consume away our sins, &c.

The difference of our estates doth no way adde or diminish to the strength and efficacie of his death: His blood can cry as loud now as heretofore, and is not lesse effectually to get pardon for our falls in the way, then for our sinings, when we were not in the way, as is evident in the sins of *Paul* before his conversion, and in sins of *David* and *Peter* after their conversion; for Christ is our continuall Mediator, and everlasting Intercessor.

Object.

But you will reply, These sins

cut

cut off all our interest in Christ,
and all relations, and therefore
no hope now.

I answer, though the comfor-
table interest be cut off, (untill
the time of sound repentance)

yet the radicall interest is not:

As the Leprous person was debar-
red the use of his house (untill he
was cleansed) yet he was not de-

barred the title and right of his
house; and therefore thou may-
est (upon thy repentance) sue

unto the Lord by the blood of
thy Saviour, the pardon of these

sins.

3 The Lord is mercifull still
unto repentants; you shall read

in Psal. 136. that his mercy is set
downe twenty six times, with the

adjunct of everlastingnesse, His
mercy endureth for ever. And Psal.

86. 5. Thou Lord art good, and ready
to forgive, and plenteous in mercy, unto

all them that call upon thee. So ver. 13.
Great is thy mercy towards me. And,

ver. 15. Thou, O Lord, art a God
full of compassion, and gracious, long-

suffering.

Sol.

No sinne
that thou
canst

grieve for,
curs off
our com-
munion
and interest.

Psal. 136.

Psal. 86. 5.

13.

15.

Mica. 7. 18. suffering, and plentiful in mercy and truth. So Micah 7. 18. Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. 19. He will turne againe, he will have compassion on us, he will subdue our iniquities, and thou wilt cast all their sinnes into the depths of the sea.

Mercy is not strange unto God, it is his nature, it is his delight, and repentance will not bee hid from his eyes, if it be not hid from our hearts: He calls us to repent, and causeth us to repent, that he might shew us his mercy, and everlastingnesse of his mercy.

6. A sixth spring of doubting was indisposition unto or about spirituall duties: Whence wee feare the truth of grace, which is active and lively, and doubt our acceptance with God, by reason of our dulnesse and deadnesse.

For the curing of this, consider

I That

1 That dulnesse in holy duties is possibly incident to men truly sanctified. Beloved, there is a great difference betwixt a dead heart, and a dull heart : That heart is properly tearmed dead, which wants a living spring, and therefore spirituall duty is contrary unto it, it hath a secret averſeness to holy services, it cares not for holy prayer; there is not onely an indifferency whether the work be done, but a determinate dislike, and positive unwillingnesse, or rather (a Nolition) a nillingnesse to the same. Whence ariseth that shuffling carriage in wicked men, to finde diverting occasions, and arguing reasonings against the strictnesse and spirituallnesse of duty.

A dead heart.

The difference twixt a dead heart and a dull heart.

But againe, that heart is properly tearmed dull, which hath in it a living spring, but hath not a lively operation : *The Spirit is willing,* (said Christ) there the spring was open; *but the flesh is weak,* there

A dull heart.

Rom. 7.
21. 22.

the operation was narrow. The Christian may say with David, *My heart (O Lord) is ready, my heart is prepared; and as Paul, I would doe good, and I delight in the Law of God after the inward man; but yet saith he, I finde a law,* that when I would doe good, evil is present with me: And I see another law in my members warring against the law of my minde. So in the

Gal. 5. 17.

Galatians, The flesh lusteth against the spirit, &c. and these are contrary one to the other, so that ye cannot doe the things that yee would. Yee would doe, but ye cannot doe; Yee cannot alwayes do the work ye would do, and ye cannot do it in such a manner as ye would do it.

Simile

You know that a full vessell which hath a narrow neck, it cannot send out the waters so speedily, nor so fully; and a sick man, who would fetch more then a turne about his chamber, hee cannot doe that sometimes; if he doth it, it is with extream wearisomnesse, not of his minde, but

of

of his body : Or as a lusty and able man escaped out of prison with a great chaine about his leg, he would run away, but the chaine hinders him, and vexeth him, so that it doth indispose him in the motion.

In like manner, is it many times with good people; The heart, the will is bent, it is resolved for prayer, for hearing, &c. **Plal. 119. 25. My soule cleaveth to the dust (that was low enough) quicken thou me,* but then there is a chaine clogs them, there is a spirituall weakness, there is flesh in them as well as spirit, and this doth dull them, this doth indispose them about the doing, about the exercise of their intentions and desires.

Therefore let us take heed of denying or concluding the absence of grace, from the infirmity of working. **David prayed often to be quickned, and so may wee, and yet be alive. It is one thing to have life, another thing to have livelihood: That may be present, when this is absent. for a Christian, I may have a dull tem-* *28. My fault meeteth for heaviness, strengthen thou me according to thy word. Life and livelihood are diff-*

per of body, not able to render unto him the spirituall sense of spirituall duties, melancholy doth intercept the vitality not onely of nature, but of grace.

2. He may not so seriously meditate and dwell upon the wayes and motives of livelihood, hee may have but remisse, and unpiercing, or unapplying thoughts of Gods great love and mercy, of Christs blood and intercession, of the Promises's goodnesse, and fulnesse; and therefore his spirit may be dull.

The oyle
may not
be on the
wheel, nor
that gale
to the ship

3. He may not have such an actuall aid and speciall influence from the Spirit of Christ to excite his spirituall frame and temper; and then if that wind bee more slacke, our ship will move on with lesse forwardnesse.

Or lastly, perhaps he may have over-lasht, he hath been (improvidently or accidentally) in the dulling wayes; he hath been setting upon some sinne, or too greedily embracing the heavy world.

world, or been idle in his particular calling. But,

Whatsoever the cause may be, this is certaine, that Indisposition is not fundamentall; it is not such a case, which nullifies the estate of Grace. For as in our most lively times there is more duty then we can thoroughly do; so in our dullest times, there is not more duty then we would doe.

Indisposition is not fundamentall.

Note.

And this know, that the Christian condition keepes up for truth of being, notwithstanding the many pauses, the many eclipses, the many indispositions which may, and do accompanie it.

But yet again, secondly, be informed of this, that God observes the bent of the heart in the duty, and accordingly accepts of it. You know that place in the Chronicles, how that the good Lord did pardon every one who prepared his heart to seeke him, though he were not cleansed according to the purification of the Sanctuary.

2 Chro. 35
18, 19.

Gods eye is more on the intent of the workman then on the extent of the work.

The

Note.

The greatest actions managed from a corrupt heart are not accepted with God: (All the superfluous and abundant gifts of the Pharisees, were worthlesse, yet the Widows mite found acceptance) The meanest duties set forth with a perfect heart are acknowledged by God, he will take notice of them; for God looks to the heart: Hee eyes not so much thy behaviour, he listens not so much to thy words, but (through these) he considers thy heart; if that come with life, though thy body come with dullnesse, though thy tongue be not so fluent, yet if there be life and truth in the heart, hee will finde duty and accept of it.

Simile.

You remember that *Simile* of the Goldsmith, who hath a skillfull eye to finde out the smaller, and neglected wayes of gold, though covered with much drossie, and many times there is much fire, and much gold, when both are hidden with dust and coal:

coal: So it is with the Lord, hee
can scent out the secrets of our
desires, and what we would doe
is observed and taken with him
for well done, notwithstanding
the many indispositions which
coveit our Altar.

Our
groans are
not hid;
from him.

Therefore it is *Dauids* counsell
to *Salomon* his son, Know thou the
God of thy Father, and serve him with
a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,
the Lord searcheth all hearts, and
understandeth all the imaginations of
the thoughts: If thou seek him, he
will be found of thee, &c.

1 Chron.
28.9.

Beloved, we are mistaken
about duty; we judge it not to be
duty, unless the tongue can
speake much, and our behaviours
be fresh, &c. As if a man were
not a man, and did no worke in
course cloaths: But know wee
that the sealing of spirituall ser-
vice with integrity of heart, is
duty.

God can
find duty
in speech-
lesse tears,
and sighs,
& groans.
Rom. 8.

And that is it which God con-
siders, and unto which hee hath
made many promises of ac-
ceptance,

ceptance, and audience; and grant.

Object. This is something to stay us, you will say: But now wee stick at this, Whether the bent of our hearts bee intire, notwithstanding our indispositions and dullnesses?

That may easily be discerned:

Sol. You may know that the bent of the heart is right and eaven in duties.

How to know that the bent of the heart is right. I By not contenting your selves with this heavy kinde of performing of duties: You will have life enough to dislike your selves, though you have not power enough to mend your services.

There are some men (and they have evill hearts) which will be picking some help and pleas for their lasie and dull serving of God, from what hath been spoken.

Object. O say they, though we cannot doe as others doe, yet our hearts are as good, and as willing; God.

God knowes the heart, and regards it.

He doth so, and he knows this of thy heart, that it yeelds him lasie service, and dislikes not it selfe therein: but now the true Christian is not satisfied with this that God accepts of a weak heart; but it would also herenpon bring him a better heart.

It doth many times fall out wch it selfe, and rebuke its owne dulnesse, *Why art thou so heavy, O my soule? and why art thou so indisposed within me?* Thou art serving of a living God, why dost thou not serve him with a more lively heart? And then it breaks out on the sudden, Well, Lord, If I had a better heart, thou shouldest have it; If I could finde more affections I would bestow them on thee.

Hereupon, It falls upon the wayes of livelihood, and exerciseth the act of quickning. It will not rest in this indisposition, but will use
all

all the means to better it selfe,
and this doth abundantly mani-
fest its bent.

Simile.

As you know, the weake per-
son he will have one turne more,
and the ingenuous Scholar will
write one line more, and the de-
sirous Archer will make one shot
more: So the sincere heart; hee
will assay yet more in duty, per-
haps frequency in duty (saith he)
may breed fervency in duty. (A
man may get him an heat by
walking, and by rubbing his be-
nummed parts.) Or perhaps,
saith hee, one duty more in
another kinde, may quicken mee
to duty in every kinde; as some
physicke and cordiall to the heart
may cause more nimbler in the
hands and feet. I am somewhat

Note.

dull in praying, I will therefore
read more, or heare more, that I
may finde matter to set on my
prayer: I may perhaps meet with
that in reading, which may set
me on in praying: Or I am some-
what dull in hearing, I will
there-

therefore pray more, perhaps God may heare my prayer, and then I may heare his word with more attention, delight, profit, &c. And assuredly so it falls out many times, that our indispositions are more about some particular duties, which are singularly removed by the small dispositions, yet left in us about some other duties.

Or if all this betters not, yet saith he, I will even goe to Gods Ordinances, and will come before him, and bring him my soule thus indisposed, perhaps yet hee may be disposed to quicken mee by his Word, to cheere me by his Sacrament: Who knowes but that he may let fall a blessing? that he may so powerfully direct himselfe to mee, as to shake my heart, as to throw off all my dull distempers, and revive my Graces, and excite my affections, &c.

So that if you perceive your dullnesses, if they grieve and displease you, if you will not rest in them,

them, if you yet set out to the means of removall, assuredly your hearts are sincere, God seeth that the bent is honest, that thou art indeed willing; and take this for thy comfort, that if it bee thus with thee, God (for present) accepts of thy services, and ere long thou shalt be freed of these indispositions, which doe accompany thee in thy services: God will drive this sleepe from thine eyes, and these fowles from thy sacrifice. Once againe, though, note that

3 The cause of all acceptance is in Christ: therefore doe not doubt that God will reject thy services because of thy indispositions, but believe hee will accept of thy sincere endeavours, because of his Christ. Beloved, it were good for us to consider all things about duty. A sincere heart must set it out, a gracious God must take it, and

a mighty Redeemer and Intercessor must present it. Christ presents that to his Father, which we present to Christ; the duty belongs to us, but the reason of acceptation is not in the Petitioner, but in the Intercessour: God accepts not for our fulnesse, nor for our livenessse, but for his Sons worthinesse, for his merits, who ever lives to make intercession for us, who offers up the prayers of the Saints, with the perfume and odours of his righteousnessse.

Rev. 8. 3

The Angel

had a gol-

den Censer,

and much

Incense.

that hee

should offer

it with the

prayers of

all Saints

upon the

golden Alt-

ar.

Are thy prayers fervent? They are not accepted for their owne strength: Are they weake? They are not rejected for their impotencie. Is thy heart sincere? Then know that Christ hath sufficiency of merits to cover thy (selfe-blamed) indispositions, and to gaine the acceptance of the weakest (if sincere) services.

He appeared

for us.

Heb. 9.

Therefore this were a good way, in case of disliked indispositions, not to place the accep-

Note. tance in our selves, but in Christ ; and though there be inequality of expressions in duty, *quoad nos*, in us, yet there is a constancy of intercession by Christ, *propter nos*, for us. Sometimes we come more fully, sometimes more emptily ; sometimes wee run, and other times all that wee can doe is to move ; sometimes affections are smart, judgements quicke, expressions ready, requests fervent, hearings reverent and delightfull, yet at other times the wheelles are almost downe, the spring moves slowly, our affections turne not so lively, our judgements are barren, language sticks, Requests breath only, but flame not ; wee heare, and give credit, and stocke it up, and that is all : Here you see the various carriages of our holy services in respect of the person, yet there is no such variety in Christ.

Whence it would follow, that if our duties found grace with God, because of their accidentall vivacity

vivacity in our performance, all our weaker services were utterly lost, and in case of the more lively services, Christ also were lost; because the reason of their acceptance would be in themselves.

But Christ is required to make up our duties, as well as to make up our persons; he must be a Mediator for these, and an Intercessor for those: And because there is a constant merit, and a perpetual offering of that same up, with all the prayers of all Saints; hence it is that they are accepted, not for their owne worth, but for his Name.

As our persons, so our prayers must stand before God by Christ.

7 A seventh spring of doubtings, was, a conceit of successlesse in duty: We have prayed much for the perfecting of such Graces, or the subduing of such corruptions, or establishing in such duties and courses, yet nothing comes of it, we are as we were, and where we were; therefore we doubt that wee are not good, or that God doth not intend

tend any good to us.

This is the spring, the cure and remedy of which, may bee made up by these considerations, viz.

1 Service and progresse in duty belongs to us, and their rewards and recompences belong to God. I have prayed a long time to God; True, and thou art bound to pray still. I have heard a long time;

True, and thou art bound to heare still. Thou dost but what thou art bound to doe. It is the Husbandmans part to plow the Land, and to sow the Corne; and it is Gods part to give the harvest. Hereupon, saith the A-

Gal. 6 9 -postle, Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if

Psal. 65. 2 we faint not: For God is a God bearing Prayer, and he will be found of them that seek him, and will not forsake them.

9. 10.

2 God is a good Master: Job did not serve him for nought. I

Psal. 118. 5 called upon the Lord, and he answered me, said David. And in another

116. 1, 2 place, He hath heard my voyce, and my

Simile.

my supplications, and inclined his eare
unto me, therefore will I call up n him
as long as I live. Not one of the ser-
vants who traffiqued with the ta-
lents, that could complaine hee
was an austere Master. Therefore
God takes it to heart, when they
in *Malacks* charged him with *Mal. 3. 13*
neglect, and irrecompence for
serving of him; *Your words have been*
strong against me, saith the Lord. How
so? To have said it is in vaine to
serve God, and what profit it that
we have kept his Ordinance, and that
we have walked meekly before the
Lord? Whereupon the Lord in-
stantly manifesteth his bountifull
and tender disposition to them
who did serve him, and think on
his Name, They shall be mine (saith
he) and when I make up my jewels, I
will spare them, as a man spareth his
owne sonne that serveth him. Then shall
see returns, and discerns between the
righteous and the wicked, between him
that serveth God, and him that serveth
him not. (i. e.) Then you shall
know that it is not lost labour to
serve him.

3 Petitioners must wait an answer, as well as present a request: Therefore know that faith in point of seeking unto God hath a double office.

Faith hath
a two-fold
office

1 One is, to deliver up in the Name of Christ our wants, which God hath promised to supply in his Word.

Psal. 123. 2

2 Another is, to expect and wait those supplies which God hath promised. Therefore saith David, *As the eyes of servants looke unto the band of their Masters, and as the eye of a maiden unto the hand of her mistresse, so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, untill (even so long, let it be never so long) untill that he have mercy upon us.*

Waiting
doth di-
stinguish
between
desires &
unsettled
humour.

And (beloved) this waiting doth notably distinguish betwixt desires, which come from an unsettled humour, and those which come from poverty of spirit. In them, we give on, but presently give up, as we doe in flight visits with men, knock at doore, and if none answer, away we goe,
our

Simile.

our businesse was little, and so our stay is answerable; but in those desires which spring from poverty of spirit, these have faith to beleeve that God is at home, and have patience to wait his answer.

Poverty of spirit.

As a poore begger, (suppose such a one as *Lazarus*) he will lye at the gate, and knock more then once, and wait more then an hour for some almes, for some crums of our tables; and so will humble Christians, who are truly poore in spirit, they will be at heaven gates, and put up request after request, and expect day after day the speeding of them from the throne of grace and mercy.

Simile.

But we cannot wait.

Object.
Sol.

You cannot! And that is the reason you misse of your answers. If beggers will not stay, they lose their almes; and if Christians will not wait, they lose their grants.

Yet let me not goe off easily from this scruple, for in it lyes the choyselt part of the cure: If

we could but wait on God, then assuredly we should see that wee have no reason to cry out of fruitlesnesse in seeking.

Object.

How may we doe to wait ?

Sol.

Thus.

Four motives to wait.

1 You are sure to speed. Certainty of answer will beget constancy in seeking. Sure to speed ? How shall wee be sure of that ? Thus.

1 Take it in promises, and so you are sure.

2 Take it in performances, and so likewise you are sure.

Promises.

For Promises, you know, there is a certainty in them ; we have no way to pierce into Gods intentions of doing us good, but by his Promises ; and in them we have : For as the words of man doe deliver unto us the thoughts of man ; so the Promises of God doe discover unto us the intentions and purposes of God. Now then observe what God hath promised to waiting ;

Simile

Hab. 2. 3.

Hab. 2. 3. *The vision is yet for an appoint-*

appointed time, but at the end it shall
speake, and not lye; though it tarry;
wait for it, because it will surely come,
it will not tarry. Here is the duty,
Wait; Here is the Promise deli-
vered, doubled, trebled, *It shall speak,*
It will come, It will surely come: Nay
doubled againe, *It shall not lye; it*
will not tarry. It is as if God had
said, Doe but wait, and you shall
be delivered, you shall be delive-
red, you shall be delivered, you
shall be delivered, you shall be de-
livered. O the Rhethoricke of
God! O the certainty of his Pro-
mises!

Psalm 27. 14. Wait on the Lord, be *Psalm 27. 14*
of good courage, and he shall strengthen
thine heart.

Esa. 40. 31. They that wait upon *Esa. 40. 31*
the Lord, shall renew their strength:
they shall mount up with wings
as Eagles, they shall run and not
be weary, and they shall walke
and not faint.

Micah 7. 7. I will look unto the *Micah 7. 7*
Lord, I will wait for the God of my
salvation, my God will bear me.

I S

Will

Performances.
Psal. 40. 1

Will you now see a certainty in performances? Then read *Psal. 40. 1. I waited patiently upon the Lord, and he inclined to me, and heard my cry. Here was waiting, and here was sure speeding.*

Object.

He was but one man.

Sol.

Then *Heb. 6. 12. Be ye followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the Promises. They did inherit the Promises, (i. e.) got all the good out of them by patient waiting. If we be sons, let us wait, and then we also shall be heires of the Promises; the good of them shall be setled upon us.*

Heb. 49. 23

See also *Esay 25. 9. and Esay 49. 23. None shall be ashamed who wait on me. From all which we infer, If God hath made sure Promises, If he hath hitherto performed those Promises unto such as wait upon him, Then if we wait, we shall surely speed, &c.*

Simile.

2 The things you desire are great, and worth the waiting for. You would thinke him a strange man, who would not wait the scaling

sealing of the pardon which the King hath promised him. It is a wonderfull thing, that when God promiseth us pardon of sins, wee cannot have patience to seeke and wait the sealing of it; yet pardon of sins is such a thing, as our very life lyes in it.

So againe, Is not grace a singular thing? Is not mortifying of sin an excellent thing? And is it much that the Lord puts us to more frequent seekings, to iterated prayers and duties, for those gifts and grants which are so high in their nature? so admirable in their use? so saving in their end? can you be better imployed?

3 The answers will sweeten, and easily recompence all the times and labours of seeking. When the man-childe is borne, all the labour in travell is forgotten; the joy of it drownes the sense of that. Let God but lift up the light of his countenance on thee, it will answer and quit to ced.
all.

As the
Wise men
when they
saw the
star, rejoy-

Cant. 3. 4.

And David doth forget the taking of his bones, &c. when God did answer him.

Prayers are our money to use.

all the prayers that ever thou madeſt in thy life. I found him whom my ſoule loveth, I held him, &c.

Doubled ſervices have uſually doubled mercies; for when God prepares the heart, he will incline the eare; and when he intends a great mercy, he firſt enlargeth the heart to a greatneſſe of deſire and ſeeking. Every true ſeeking of God opens the heart wider, and ſecretly addes to the ſtock; The more prayers we have put up to uſe in the hands of God, the larger will the returne of them prove: When wee have beene long ſuiters, God doth (ordinarily) at length diſmiſſe us with more then what wee aſke; ſo that he will answer us not only for our prayers, but alſo for our time.

5 We ſhall have the beſt things in the fitteſt times; therefore we ſhould not accuſe our ſervices as loſt, for God will answer them; but then it ſhall be in the beſt things, at the beſt times.

O,

O, will you say, Is it not more **Object.**
then time that I had more grace,
and sin more subdued?

I answer, Perhaps not; God
doth know that thou hast a proud
Sol.
temper, and thou growest bigge,
and art apt to swell upon enlarge-
ments; thou art apt to despise
others, and to make glorious
conceits of thy selfe, and therefore
he doth answer thee, not by victo-
ry, but by combate; That is, he
doth not presently subdue thy
sin, that it shall not trouble thee,
but lets it alone that it shall exer-
cise thee, thou shalt finde matter
to keep thee low and humble,
when still thou feelest such rem-
nants, and workings of corrup-
tion. To the resistance of which
God doth yet enable, and after
thy heart growes more emptied,
thou shalt have victory. Againe,
though thou prayest against thy
sins, yet thou dost venture upon
the provocations and occasions
of sinne, and therefore the Lord
may justly hold up, because
thou

thou holdst not in. Now the Lord (by his silence) will teach thee in these times, forbearance on thy part, as well as forbearance on his part; and then upon thy next prayers accompanied with this watchfulnesse, and avoydance of occasions, he will let fall more strength and power to mortifie thy sinfull dispositions.

Wherefore let us not faint in case of suspensions, for God doth suspend his grants to the times, when thou art fitted to receive them, and when it is fit for him to open them.

Is it sin that thou wouldst have subdued? Doe thou seek his subduing power, and withall, decline inviting occasions either from thy selfe or others, and then God will heare thee. Now thou art fitted, and now is it fit for God to help thee; but if thou wilt pray against the disposition, and run still upon the occasion, God will not answer thee.

*Is it grace and heavynesse in duty
which*

which thou wouldest have? Then thou must use former grace, and sticke close with humbleness, and diligence, and reverence to the means, and now God will supply all thy wants. Untill thou hast a more humble and doing heart, thou art not fitted for more grace. *God giveth more grace to the humble, saith James 4.*
James.

I say, he will give thee more grace: Thou shalt have enough for thy condition, and enough for thy salvation, although thou hast not such an equall measure with others, whom God intends for more publick use and service, then he doth thee.

5 Gods forbearings should not occasion cessation, but earnestnesse: He is not silent, that we thereby should become speechlesse, but that our desires should grow more fervent.

You know that the skilfull Angler doth not draw back his *Simile.* bait that the fish should not bite, but

but that by this meanes he should the more greedily leap after the bait.

And the tender mother steps aside, not that shee would not have the child seek her, but that it may even dote after her.

Jer. 11. 8.

So doth God many times draw backe and step aside, and as the Prophet Jeremy speaks, *He becomes as a stranger, and as a way-faring man who turneth aside, &c.* And as

He knows
our
thoughts
long before
His care is
open, and
before they
call I will
answer.

Esa.

Whiles
they are
speaking, I
will an-
swer.

Loc. cit.

David speaketh, *He is as one that sleeps*: Why? What? Is it that he doth not know us? No. Is it that he doth not heare us? No. Is it that hee will not speed us? No.

Why then? Surely because first he delights in this musick, he smells a sweet odour and savour in all our humble sacrifices, hee delights in the broken heart.

2 Hee loves that wee should strive with him for his graces, (that Ro. 15. 30 is the phrase Rom. 15. 30.) and Ro. 12. 3. 4 *wrestle with him* (as Jacob) and so Eze. 62. 7. *prevail upon him*: And that we should give

give him no rest, (Esa. 62. 7.) untill
he hath satisfied our soules with mercy,
and established them with his grace.

3 He would inhanche the good-
nesse of the things desired, and
make us to wear the answers
with more thankfulness to him-
selfe, with more comfort to our
selves, and with more benefit to
others.

8 An eighth cause of doubt-
ings was, weaknesse of judge-
ment about the essentials of sal-
vation, which necessarily doth
cause doubtings, both in respect
of those suspicions, and errors,
and mistakings to which it is
subject; as also in respect of that
scrupulosity which ever adheres
to the conscience, where weak-
nesse adheres to the judgement.

Now the remedy of this
spring, consists in these particu-
lars,

1. Get a distinct knowledge of
Fundamentals : It is the empti-
nesse of our minds that wee bee
preposterous in our searches.

Many

Many a Christian loseth himselfe in a sea of opinions, before hee hath squared himselfe with the first grounds of Religion.

Simile.

Remember this, that the first truths doe support and maintaine the rest, (as the cornerstone the rest of the building) and are as the originall Will, which decides many scruples in Law. Hence is it, that some men doubt about speciall conclusions, because they are ignorant of the generall principles, which were they distinctly knowne, the falsity of any conclusion would easily become evident unto them.

Simile.

Ergo, saith Paul, Rom 14. 1. Him that is weak in the faith, receive you, but not to doubfull disputations.

Men usually dispute first, and know last. As if a souldier would range an Army, before hee hath learned to handle his weapons. How ordinary is it to heare disputes of Original sin, of Predestination, of Redemption, of Faith and Justification, of Assurance and of Obedience, of the degrees of grace and duty, of the direct and absolute way of life?

life? &c. I say it is ordinary to heare some arguing of these, who yet are ignorant of the nature of these. But,

Pauls method was to lay down his foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith towards God, which if *Paul* thought fit to teach, I thinke fit for us to learne. That ship rowls least, which is well bottomed; and that house shakes least, which is well founded; And that Christian doubts least, who is well grounded in the maine points of Religion: For besides this, that Primitive truths give an aime to all truths; so likewise they uncase all errors, and heresies, and opinions, and arguments which come to pervert the minde another way. And surely when the minde obtains an evidence by one truth for another, and by truth also of errorr contrary unto it, it is in the least hazard of doubting; for as much as doubtings ordinarily

Heb. 6. 1.

True knowledge is as the day wherein we walk more steadfastly; and ignorance like the night, in which we are full of fears, and often stumble.

ly arise from some error, or misapprehension in the minde.

2 Get a distinguishing knowledge of Fundamentals from Accessories. Every part of the house is not the corner-stone or the pillars: A man may take away much, and yet the house may stand: If you take away the painting and musicke, or some feelings, and annexed posts, yet the house may stand.

Simile.

So may a Christians salvation, though he know not many accessory truths; nay, although he mistake about them; nay, although he deny them, if this denial be not accompanied with a proud perversnesse, but arise only from inevidence and inability.

There are three things, about which it were good for Christians to have a distinguishing knowledge, viz.

1 Fundamentals.

2 Consequents.

3 Indifferents.

Fun-

Fundamentals, I call those ^{Three} Truths which take up the worke ^{things.} and way of salvation; as the doctrine of sinne, and of Christ, and Faith, and Repentance, &c. for these are such things, without the knowledge of which, no man can be saved.

Consequents, I call those illations or inferences which doe flow from the primitive truths, either *virtute rei*, in the nature of the thing, just as a stream flows from the fountaine; or *virtute intellectus*, in the judgement of the person, as the conclusion is made by such or such a mans conjectural opinion, to flow from such a principle, or such a ^{Yet actions in themselves indifferent in respect of circumstances, may be offensive & sinfull. See Rom. 14, 15, &c.} Text.

Indifferents, I call those actions which in themselves are neither holy, nor evill; neither is a man by any expresse command from God, (*specificative*) enjoyned them, or (*specificative*) prohibited them: Which things considered absolutely, if a man doth use

nse them he shall not be saved; if he doth not, he shall not be damned. They doe no more constitute a Christian, then a garment doth a man; which whether hee doth weare it yea or no, yet still he is a man.

Now this distinguishing knowledge doth exceedingly assoyle the doubting heart, which doth oft-times shake and rowle about the lawfulness of indifferents, &c.

3 Reduce all conjectures and consequent truths unto the first truth: It is the counsell of the Apostle, 1 Thess. 5. 21. *Prove all things: And the Prophet Esaiab, To the Law, and to the testimony, Esa. 8. 20.*

It was a good speech of Saint *Austine* to *Manicheus*, contesting with him for audience; *Hear me, heare mee*, said *Manicheus*; *Nay*, saith *St. Augustine*, *Nec ego te, nec tume, sed ambo audiamus Apostolum, dicentem, Peccatum non cognovi, &c.*

Beloved, we may see what weak
crea-

creatures we are, when truths fall downe amongst us, and when we sit in the Tribunall; alas, what distractions, what severall stamps doe our severall opinions set on them? what distinctions, limitations, qualifications! We will be sure every one of us to handle the question so, that it shall be so far true, as may stand with our owne delights, profits, aimes, and ends; We doe many times for personall respects, discourse and determine of truths.

But now reduce them to the first truths, how doe our empty and contrary opinions, and fancies clatter and shiver to dust? they fall downe before the Word of God, as Dagon did before the Arke of God; for the Scriptures are the Touch-stone, which will easily decide counterfeit glosses, and errours, from genuine and proper truths; Genuine truths are like the young Eagles, that can with open eyes behold the light of the Sunne, and erroneous glosses

ses and opinions are like sore eyes, which cannot behold the Sunne without twinckling, and watering, and closing.

And note by the way, that if the truth be the truth of God, it doth tend to these three things; viz.

1 The glory of his rich Grace, Ephes. 1. 12.

2 Setting of peace in the Conscience, Rom, 5. 1.

3 Mortifying of sinne, Titus 2. 12.

4 Establisth the minde in declared truths, Beware, saith the Apostle, Peter, (seeing ye know these things) lest yee being led away with the errour of the wicked, fall away from your owne stedfastnesse.

It is not unknown, that some (like Pedlars) wander up and downe, and make a living by their errours; subtill people, and crafty to their owne confusion, who have only a strength of parts to glosse over sins and errours, & to weaken the strength of truths, and wayes to Heaven; most rendering

bring children of Satan, for they
 cease not to pervert the right
 wayes of the Lord, and yet so ar- A&.13.18
 tificially doe they vent their
 wares, so neatly doe they set them
 out with the applause of reason,
 and carnall licentiousnesse, that
 many weak-headed Christians
 swallow up their baits, drinke up
 their cups, lick in their tumultu-
 ous and unsetling doctrines; yea,
 and some of higher judgements
 doe many times reele and stagger
 at the same.

VVhat is the reason?

Surely this; The Master is loo-
 sing the Auctor, and therefore
 the Ship begins to tosse. Men doe
 not establish their hearts in
 knowne and approved truths;
 they doe not confirme their faith
 to what God saith against that
 bewitching discourse of reason
 and liberty; they will be listning
 to naturall reason, and therefore
 with *Nicodemus*, break out, *How*
can this be? When men will not
 stick to truths, it is just that they
 K should

should be troubled with doubts and errours.

It is the Apostles counsell, 1 Thel. 5. 21. *Hold fast that which is good.* So, 2 Tim. 1. 13. *Hold fast the forme of sound words, &c.* That is, claspe it, graspe it, maintaine it, as one would a jewell in his hands, the which another would violently force away. VVhen the minde is rooted in truth, it will not shake with so many doubts, which will assuredly spring from erroneous Principles, and Doctrines.

Act. 15. 21
It seemed
good to the
holy Ghost,
and to us,
to lay upon
you no greater
burden
then these
necessary
things.

5 Meddle with no more truths then will save thy soule, and serve thy particular relations. A man may goe in a shallow water, who rises and falls, waves and slips in a deep channell. I will tell you, as all duties, so all truths doe not concerne all men: God doth not expect or require that every Christian should be a Doctor of the Chaire: Some points in Religion are high, and mysterious; others are dark, and lye yet under predi-

prediction and Prophecy; but those parts which direct to thy duty here, and to thy salvation hereafter, are cleare, expresse; he who runs may read them.

Busie thy selfe most in these; study to be a good man, and a good master; a good man, and a good servant, &c. Exercise thy selfe to know what concernes thee, and then to pray thy selfe in to the practise of that. This is a wise way, and settled, and which is exempted from vaine turmoiles and many judiciall doubtings.

6 Informe the Conscience with the nature of a Christian, and saving condition; some things are required towards salvation, some things unto salvation; some things give a being, other things a comfortable being; Of all which if a person had a speciall and distinct knowledge, he might walke more quietly without feares and doubtings. Shal I give you an hint of some particulars I remember when these Propositions.

Four particulars
worthy of
weak christians distinct consideration.

Rom. 7.

7. 9.

Rom. 8. 15

Mat. 11. 28

Simile.

I Preparations to Grace are different and unequal; all men are not prepared by the same degrees, or in the same manner for Christ; Conviction of the Natural estate, and attrition, and anguish, and those legall operations, these are preparations; for men must *know* their sinfull condition, they must have the *spirit* of bondage, they must be *beavie*, and *weary*, before they can lay hold on Christ.

Now those legall impressions are different; every Beleever (of ripe years) hath felt them, more or lesse, yet all cannot say alike. Every childe feeles something in his birth, but some children are brought forth with more paines, and others with lesse difficulty; *Lydia* was quickly delivered, but *Paul* lyes by it some dayes. Some people can say, as *David* in another case, *Sorrow endured for a night, but joy came in the morning*; Others may say as the same *David*, *Night and day thy hand was heavy upon me.*

The

The Lord is pleased (for he is an arbitrary Agent both for the matter and manner in our spirituall alteration) to single out some persons, and to charge their sins deep upon their Consciences, and to pursue them with singular terrours, to sticke his arrowes and their owne sins so close that they know not which way to turne themselves. He doth almost grinde them to powder, and casts them to the dust, and to the lowest amazements, and distractions ; and then as the skilfull Artificer, who hath bruised, and battered, and broken the masse into pieces, and throwne it into the fire, and melted it, he yet at length takes it out, and fashions from all this, a most comly, and precious, and usefull vessell : So doth the Lord many times with some people, he returnes them their old sins, and powerfully mingles the Law and their sins, and their Consciences together, and so with that hammer bruiseeth, and breakes their

Some persons greatly prepared.

sinfull hearts, and with that fire melts them, and dissolves them as it were; yet after a long and sad time of sensible conviction, and horrible bondage, he graciously formes the Lord Jesus in their hearts, and renewes his blessed Image of Grace, and they become the most acceptable Vessels of glory.

Others
gently pre-
pared.

But with other persons he deals not in this high measure; he doth indeed arrest them with the Law, but doth not so fetter and iron them; he doth not so imprison them, but upon their falling downe he is pleased to release them from their guilt and feares, and to deliver them from the powers of darknesse, into the marvellous liberty of the Sons of God.

Note.

Therefore know this; that when God hath attained his end, he ceaseth in this way of legall operation.

Quest.

What is his end? will you say.

Sol.

I answer, his end is in these legall preparations;

I To

1 To evidence unto a man the
foulness of his heart and life.

2 To convince him of a to-
tall unworthiness.

3 To produce most inward
dislikes of such an abominable
thing as sin is.

4 To make a man willing, up-
on Gods owne conditions, to
take and receive Christ.

These are the ends, which be-
ing in some sooner, in others
later, accomplished, the Lord
doth cease the workings of pre-
paration.

Legall
troubles &
workings
cease,
when God
attaines
his end.

Which is
in some
sooner, &
in some
later.

You know that if a peece of
stone or wood will breake with
one or two blows, we spare the
rest; and if the Masse will yeeld in
one dayes firing, wee then let it
out. So, &c. But if yet the knot-
tiness be great, and resistance
long, then knotty wood must
have iterated blows, and un-
yeelding metall must have the
greater fire.

Simile.

From all this, the doubtfull
heart may perhaps bee settled a-

bout his estate in grace : Aske him, Dost thou love God? I do: Serve him with all thy might, in all thy wayes? I doe : Rest upon Jesus Christ? I doe : Combat, and war against sinne? I do: and yet I feare all is not right : Why? Because I never had such terrors as others. Now then informe thy weake judgement, If God hath shewn unto thee thy sinfulness; If hee hath abated thee, and emptied thee of thy selfe; If sinne and thou are now at defiance; If thou hast yeelded unto the receiving of Christ upon his owne termes and conditions, though thy legall preparations were not answerable to others, either for intention of strength and measure, or for extension of length and time, yet thy condition is good and safe: For that humiliation which is accompanied with these issues, is assuredly blessed and comfortable. If the physick carries away the humour, though it doe not
make

Simile.

make the person so sicke, yet it is good: And though a man want a storme to drive him to shore, yet is he safe enough, if he bee landed with a softer gale and tide.

2 The operations of Grace are also different and unequall, notwithstanding that Christians may have one common principle, and the same externall means of grace. I beseech you observe this.

1 There is one and the same (specificall) seed of regenerating grace in all Christians; the same spirit of holinesse, of faith, of repentance, of love, &c. All Christians are bottomed alike, and rooted alike for the substantiall part of Grace.

2 That many Christians may live under the same meanes of Grace, as many people doe live under the same light and heat of the Sun, and children under the same parentre.

3 That the exercises of their

K. 5.

graces.

Simile.

graces may yet be different; As children having the same School, may sit in severall formes, and having the same food, may yet have severall agilities and abilities.

So Christians, who have the same principles of beleeving and repenting, and praying, and doing, and who have the same Ministry, and common assistances, may yet vary and differ in the active part of graces and duties. One may know more then another, one may rest upon Gods Promises more then another, one may pray with more fervency then another, one may doe the other parts of duty more then another, &c. yet all these may have truth of grace, and may be saved.

Therefore know, that inequality of holy operation, doth not spring from nullity or falsnesse of Grace, but sometimes from the variety of particular occasions, sometimes from the variety of

Inequality
of holy
operation,
whence

of particular ends, sometimes from the variety of particular assistance. Every Christian hath not alike.

1 Forcible occasion to exercise his faith and patience :

Nor secondly, doth God intend every Christian for some singular ends and services, to which hee fits others by the greater improvement, and use of their graces.

3 Neither hath every man at all times an equall gale or breath of spirituall assistance to enlighten him, to excite, and affect, and draw him. I might also adde,

4 Neither doth every Christian stir up the gifts and graces in him; he doth not wisely on all occasions and motions improve his stock.

5 Neither hath every man a like temper and constitution, which conduceth much to the actions of the soule.

6 Neither doth every calling
ad-

admit unto every Christian those spaces, and leasures, and remissions, or vacations, which some have to set on their heavenly frame and course.

Simile.

It is with true Christians as with true men: Every man hath a soule, and faculty from that soule, and actions issuing out of those faculties, yet every man is not equall in the expressive wayes of nature: So is it with Christians, all have truth of grace alike, but the exercise of it is different and personall.

Branches.

3 As the actions, so the degrees of Grace are different: Compare Christian with Christian, it is as if you should compare one branch and limbe of a tree with another; where though all be set in one common root, yet their particular measures are more and lesse. Or, as if one did compare the Starres together, where though all be interested in the heavenly order, yet they differ among themselves in respect of magnitude and light, Te

Stars.

Sheep.

Yee are the body of Christ, (saith the Apostle, 1 Cor. 12. 27.) and Members. members in particular; this was a glorious and gracious condition: But then, vers. 29. Are all Apostles? are all Prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? doe all speak with tongues? Nay, Eph. 4. 11. Hee gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers.

Now as this holds firm enough in various degrees of singular gifts for edification, so likewise it is as evident in those special graces for sanctification: For, Are all in the fold of Christ, sheep? There are some lambs: Peter is commanded to feed both, (Ergo there are both) Are all in the garden of Christ, Cedars? There are some tender Vines. Are all in the household of Christ, strong men? There are some young, there are some babes in Christ too. So Heb. 5. 13. and 1 Joh. 2. 12, 13, *I write unto you little.*

As gifts for edification, so graces for sanctification are different.

1 Joh. 2. 12, 13.

chil-

children, because your finnes are forgiven you, and because you have known the Father. You see little children there, as well as young men and fathers; and these children, though children, though little children, though very tender Christians, yet they know the Father, and they had pardon of sin.

Brethren, how exceedingly do we disturb our selves with doubtings here? Many people, through a weaknesse (I say no more) of judgement, doe fall out with their estate and condition, molest, and afflict their hearts, close up all against themselves, suspect, and foolishly reason and argue the nullity of a gracious condition, from the imperfections which they observe in their graces, from their behindments in faith, and zeale, and sorrow, &c. Ah ignorant people! who are truly industrious after the great measures of Grace, and will not yet quiet their feares, and

and still their doubtings with this;

1 That such earnest pantings, and inquietations, and unsatisfiableness cannot but spring from truth of grace.

2 Then, that where grace is in truth, though in the lowest measure, there the soule hath interest in Christ, in all the Promises, in God, in Heaven, in all.

Remember this, He who hath least in grace, hath not that which he would have; and hee who hath most in grace, hath not that which he should have; and he who hath any truth of grace, hath enough to change his heart, and save his soule. I would beleeve in that fulnesse of assurance and reliance as thou dost, and if I cannot, I will yet beleeve as well as I can. Hee who said, *O woman, great is thy faith,* said also to another, *not so strong, Thy faith hath saved thee.* No man misseth of heaven for want of measure, but of truth. Our

consolation lyes much in the comparative degree, but our salvation is in the positive : Much grace will yeeld unto us here our heaven , and any grace , if true, will yeeld us heaven hereafter.

4 The separable fruits of true grace are different , not onely if you compare one Christian with another, but if you compare the same Christian with himselfe in divers times and occurren-
cer.

I If you compare Christian with Christian in respect of comfortables , it is night with one, when it is day with another : One goes on heavily oppressed, *walking in darknesse*, (that is the Prophets phrase, *Esa. 50. 10.*) He hath not that sensible light of divine favour, (*Thou bidst thy face*, said David, *and I was troubled*, *Psal. 30. 7.*) Hee hath not that sensible joy or testimony of his gracious condition, (*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation*, *Psal. 51. 12.*) How many mourners are there :

Esa. 50. 10.
Light.

Psal. 30. 7
Joy.

51. 12.

there in Zion? Many who lament the absence of favour, of joy, of peace.

Yet some others there are who doe beleeve, and doe rejoyce in beleeving: They see Christ in their armes, they know whom they have beleeved, and rejoyce with joy unspeakable and glorious, 1 Pet. 1.8.

As Simeon
As Paul.

2 Tim. 1. 12
1 Pet. 1. 8,

2 If you compare the same Christian with himselfe: For it is with our day of grace, as in this of nature, there are many eclipses, many variations. Job, how thankfull, how patient, how confident? Blessed bee the name of the Lord: And, should wee receive good at the hands of God, and not evill? And, though he kill me, yet will I trust in him: Yet anon, how all seems to go againe! Hee curseth the day of his birth, hee argues it with God, and expostulates much about the hardnesse of his condition.

So David, in some Psalms, all in joy, all in triumph, all in peace; God deals well with him,
an-

Psal. 42.

answers him, revives him: yet presently wee shall finde him in his teares, in his suspitions, *Hadst God forgotten to be gracious? in secret disputes with his sad soule, Why art thou cast downe, O my soule, and why art thou disquieted within me?*

Now this sensible change and contrariety in the soule, doth no more argue the falsenesse of grace, then the goings and comings of cheerfulness in the body conclude the want of true life in it: The comfortables of grace are an overplus of our wages, which yet are held up sometimes from the most upright servant.

9 A ninth cause of doubtings, was, the ignorance of the doctrine of Justification: For (you remember) that I told you this, That sensible guilt was troublesome, a wounded condition was fearfull. When a person finds just cause of feares, many sinnes, undeniable sinnes, and looks all over himselfe, and all abroad, and can finde no comforter, no one

one able to slep in'twixt God and his soule, no peace-maker, no one to lay his burden upon, hee must necessarily bee perplexed with many doubts. For the cure & remedy of which, be pleased to consider of some particular Propositions, which I will lay down to unfold the businesse and comforts of Justification unto beleeving penitents; for to these onely I addresse my speech.

I In Justification, our debts are charged upon Christ: they goe upon his account. You know that in sinne, there is the viciious and staining quality of it, and then there is the resulting guilt of it, which is the obligation of a sinner over to the judgement seat of God, to answer for sin.

Now this guilt, (in which lies our debt) this is charged upon Christ: Therefore (saith the Apostle) God was in Christ reconciling the world to himselfe, not imputing their trespasses unto them: And, hath made him to be sinne for us,

2 Cor. 5.19

Simile.

Heb. 7. 22.
Iesus made
a surety of
a better
Testament.

Fidejussor.

Esa. 53. 4, 5

Lev. 16, 21
Scape-
goat,

us, who knew no sinne. You know in Law, the wives debts are charged upon the husband; and if the debtor be disabled, then the creditor sues the surety. *Fidejussor*, or surety, and *Debitor* in Law, are reputed as one person: Now Christ is our *Fidejussor*, He is made a surety of sinne for us, saith the Apostle: For us, (*i.*) *vice nostra*, or *loco nostro*, (*i.*) in our stead. A surety for us, one *Fidejussor*. who put our scores on his accounts, our burden on his shoulder: So the Prophet, Esa. 53. He hath borne our griefes, and carried our sorrowes. How so? He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: (*i.*) Hee stood in our stead, hee took upon him the answering of our finnes, the satisfying of our debts, the clearing of our guilt, and therefore was it that he was so bruised, &c.

You remember the Scape-goat, Upon his head, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their finnes, were

con-

confessed and put. And the Goat did 22.
beare upon him all their iniquities, &c.

What is the meaning of this?

Surely Jesus Christ, upon whom Christ.
our finnes were laid, and who
alone dyed for the ungodly, and
bare our burdens away. There-
fore the Beleever in the sense of
guilt should runne unto Christ,
and offer up his blood unto the
Father, and say, Lord, it is true,
I owe thee so much, yet Father
forgive me, remember that thine
owne Sonne was my ransome, his
blood was the price, hee was my
surety, and undertook to answer
for my finnes; I beseech thee ac-
cept of his attonement, for hee
is my Surety, my Redemption;
Thou must be satisfied, but Christ
hath satisfied thee, not for him-
selfe, what finnes had he of his
owne? but for mee, (gracious
Father) they were my debts
which he satisfied for; and looke
over thy book, and thou shalt find
it so, for thou hast said, *Hee was
made sin for us, and that he was woun-
ded for our transgressions.* Now

Now this is a great stay, a great comfort, that we our selves are not to make up our accounts and reckonings, but that Christ hath cleared twixt us and God; there-

Ephes. 1. 7 fore it is said, *Ephes. 1. 7* that *in his blood we have redemption, even the forgiveness of sins.*

2 In Justification, the believing penitent hath an universall discharge, VVhat is that? That is, when a man is in Christ, when he is a true believer, he doth not then receive a particular acquittance from such or such sins, but an universall discharge from all the sins he hath committed. You

1cr. 33. 8 know the promise, *Jer. 33. 8.* *I will pardon all their iniquities whereby they have sinned, and whereby they have transgressed against me. 9. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise and honour, &c.*

Therefore David speaking of Gods fulnesse, and extent of pardoning, and remitting mercy, he *Psa. 85. 2* saith, *Psal. 85. 2.* *Thou hast forgiven the iniquity of thy people, thou hast covered*

vered all their sins. *Selah.* VVhich covering of all sin, is in sense the same with the Apostles not imputing of sin, *Rom. 4.* and *2 Cor. 5.*

This is a true axiome, *Peccata non minuunt justificationem*; Though sins be different, yet justification is not. VVhen the Lord God justifies a person, the different qualities and circumstances of former sins doe not hinder their pardon, and discharge. You know that one may with a pen crosse a great summe as well as a little summe; and a King can give a pardon not only for petty offences, but also for rebellions and treasons, and so he doth many times. It is therefore an observable passage in Holy VVrit, that there is scarce a sin in any kind, but we may read the blotting of it unto a believing and repenting person, *viz.*

Simile.

Note.

Originall sinne, which was the great deluge of our natures, and the first fire which inflamed the whole world of mankind, yet this sin was pardoned to *Adam.*

Justification on reacheth all sorts of debts.

Drun-

Drunkennesse, another sinne which the Apostle (in 1 Cor. 6. 8.) raiseth to the height of eternall separation, yet was it pardoned to *Noah*, a beleeving penitent.

Lying, another sin, which is of it-selfe apt to locke the gates of heaven, (Rev. 22. 15.) yet was it pardoned to *Abraham*, the Father of the faithfull.

Incest, that unnaturall commixture, yet pardoned to *Lot*.

Murder, a crying sinne, and Adultery, a fearefull sin, yet both pardoned unto a repenting and beleeving *David*.

Idolatry, that angering and provoking sin, a sin which unthrones God, and makes a god, yet pardoned unto *Salomon*.

What should I mention more? Impatience, a sinne, yet pardoned to *Job*.

Passion, a sinne, yet pardoned to *Jonah*.

Denial of Christ, against knowledge and resolution, a high sin, (and such as a Donatist upon no termes

termes would admit, as capable of a re-acceptation) yet graciously pardoned to *Peter*.

Persecuting of the Gospell of Christ, blasphemy, and compelling of others to blaspheme (*i.e.*) injuriously, and despitefully to oppose Jesus Christ, his Word, his Members; O how piercing and bleeding a sin! yet pardoned to *Paul*, he obtained mercy.

Oppression and Covetousnesse, by which a man doth sucke the bloud and life of others, yet pardoned to *Zachew*.

Nay yet once more, as you may And all see pardon in Justification, releasing all sorts of debts, so you shall find it releasing all sorts of debtors. Take one place for all, in *Levit. 4.* where the Lord goes over all sorts and divisions of sinners, and appointed offerings for them all, and proclaimes pardon to them all, *viz.* First, the Priests, *ver. 3.* Then secondly, the whole Congregation, *ver. 13.* and *20.* Then thirdly, a Ruler, *ver. 22, 24.*

L

Then

Then fourthly, any one of the common people, *verse 27, 28, 31, &c.*

Under which foure rankes, he drawes in all sorts and conditions of men; and not only appoints a sin-offering for them all, but also accepts of the same; by which, what is else meant but the power and efficacy of the blood of Christ, by which all sorts of sins are pardoned to all sorts of beleeving and repenting sinners?

Object.

Ah Lord! will many a person cry out. Why? what is the matter? Why art thou so heavie? Why? such and such a sin heretofore.

Sol.

I reply, Is there not a Justification? Yes: And how comes sinne to be pardoned? Is it not by the blood of Christ? Yes: But these were great sins; and did Christ dye for the expiation of little sins only? What, did he satisfie for infirmities only, and not for enormities also? And doth Christ indeed leave the greatest debts for

to cleare? Or cannot faith receive the acquittance of great sins, as well as indeliberated finnes? Was not the sinne-offering for all sorts of persons? And have not all sorts of sins come within the Proclamation? No, no, my brethren, Justification (without all doubt) crosseth the book. Thou art a debtor, saith God: I am, Lord, saith the penitent, I acknowledge my sins; and am sorry for my transgressions, but I intend to run on the score no longer. Thou art a debtor, saith God; I am, Lord, saith the Beleever, and thou hast said, *If any man sin, hee hath an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for finnes; and I beleeve on him Lord; I take him to be my sin-offering, and in his blood only I seek for pardon and redemption from all my sins; this were the way to support our selves against our many & strong doubtings about pardon of sins; Yet the Lord knowes I have re-*

L 2 pented

repented of them, and I doe beleev
in Jesus Christ for the pardon o
them, I heare and know that he is
the Mediator of the New Testa-
ment, and that his blood satisfie
for all sorts of debtors, and debt
too; though one sin may differ
from another, yet his merit and
satisfaction differs not from it
selfe, but is all-sufficient; and
therefore I acknowledge the debt,
and rest on his blood for a full
discharge.

3 Discharges in Justification
are not repealed, they are not cal-
led in againe. *Peccata non redeunt,*
(i. e.) Subsequent sins and falls
do not nullifie and evacuate for-
mer grants and pardons: for as
much as 1. Pardon of sin springs
from speciall love and mercy,
which alter not their consigned
acts. 2. It is founded in an un-
alterable, and absolute, and con-
stant satisfaction; for sinne is not
pardoned for any dignity in the
person. In the person pardoned,
there is no reason or cause of
par-

pardon, but that is in the blood of Christ, which blood alters and lessens, and abates not, though our carriages do.

Hence it is that pardon of sinne in Justification, is stiled *the blotting out of the hand-writing*, Col. 2. 14. If a writing bee blurred a little, and somewhat blotted, yet it may be read; but if it blotted out, it is no more legible, and who can be called to account upon record when the writings are obliterated? The same phrase is used, Isa. 44. 22. *I have blotted out as a thicke cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.* Where me thinks something else falls in to our comfort, viz. That God himselfe doth blot out. Though an under officer should blot out an indictment, that perhaps may help nothings; but when the King doth it, who is chiefe Judge, then the indictment cannot returne.

Now it is the Lord himselfe who doth blot out transgressions; he doth it, who onely hath

power of life and death, of condemning or absolving.

In like manner, there is another phrase, Mica. 7. 19. *Thou wilt cast all their finnes into the depths of the sea.* If a thing were cast into a river which might be fathomed, then it might be brought up againe; or if it were cast upon the sea onely, yet it might be discerned, and taken up againe; but when it is in the depths, cast into the depths, the bottome of the sea, now it cannot be fathomed up again.

By which Metaphor the Lord intends to expresse unto us the powerfull energy of pardoning mercy, that our finnes shall rise no more against us; Hee will cleare them so, that they (being once forgiven) shall come on the account no more: Hee will drowne their guilt, that it shall not come up against us before him the second time.

Therefore Paul discoursing of Justification, Rom. 4. He useth another

another phrase to expresse this point, vers. 7. *Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.* Covered: Covering is such an action which is opposed to disclosure, and judiciall evidences, and to be covered, is to be hid so, and closed, as not to appeare with a judiciall guilt upon it.

Now the Lord here is said to cover sinne in Justification: What is that? That is, the Lord will looke on those finnes no more with a judiciall eye, he will not call them to account any more, that is the meaning of the phrase.

As when a Prince reads over many Treasons, and meets with such and such which he hath pardoned, he reads on, hee passeth by, hee now takes no notice of them, he is not stirred, he sends not out against those whom hee hath pardoned: So, &c. This is for God to cover sinne, viz. not to looke on the sinne pardoned

with a judiciall eye. It is not, as some most empty and dull heads fancie it, God doth not see sinne at all, and he cannot. Of all the opinions in the world, this is the most ridiculous and childish to men who beleeve an All-seeing God: But to cover sinne, is not simply not to see it, but to looke it over as it were, and not to sit or stand upon it with a judiciall eye, (*i.*) to account for pardoned sins no more.

As the Gospel needs to be given but once, so a mans sinnee's but one to be forgiven, once is enough, because if once, then for ever.

Hence in the New Covenant, God promising to justifie, or to pardon sin, he saith not onely, *I will forgive their iniquity*, but addes, *I will remember their sinne no more*, Jer. 31. 34. What is that? That is, if I once forgive their sinne, I will not forgive it againe, it shall not need againe to be forgiven, once shall serve the turne, I will remember it no more. The meaning is, it shall quite bee forgotten, I will no more plead with them for what I have once pardoned.

I confesse, that the sense, and fruit, and assurance of a sin pardoned, this may (*redire*) returne; Note. this may be lost and got, and the acts of faith concerning the particular pardon of a particular sin, may do so, but Gods justifying act, his pardoning act is a free and constant act : Otherwise if hee pardoned us respectively upon an absolute Incessation about sinne, there were no flesh living that could be justified.

The apprehension of pardon is variable and yet the pardon it self is immutable.

4 Discharges in Justification reach not onely to the guilt, but also to the consequents of guilt : for it is a true rule, *Justificatio tollit poenalia*. And, *remissio missa culpa*. Therefore saith the Apostle, *Rom. 8. 1.* There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. You know that if the body falls, then the shadow which attends the body, that falls too; and if the debt bee discharged, the prison is discharged. Wee have by the blood of Christ the forgivenesse of our finnes, and therefore the remission of all satisfiings

atisfying punishment : Why else doth the Apostle say, Gal. 3. 13. *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us?* As Christ is said to be made sinne for us, 2 Cor. 5. so is he here said to bee made a curse for us. Hee is made sinne for us, by taking upon him the guilt of our sinnes; and he is made a curse for us, by bearing that wrath and punishment which was due to us, because of our sins.

Nay, let mee speake a bold truth; To have sinne remitted, and yet to be exposed to punishment, (I speake onely of satisfying punishment) cannot stand with that unspotted justice of God; for no man is justly punished but by reason of unsatisfied guilt. (*In peccato fundatur reatus pœne*, saith *Aquinas* well.) Now if Christ hath fully and perfectly satisfied for the guilt, then punishment hath no ground, unlesse we will say that God will punish for that which is already satisfied,
or

For that Christs satisfaction is not totall, but partiall, (i.) he satisfied for a part, and left some parts of satisfying punishment to us, which is the opinion of the Papists for their humane satisfactions.

But to draw up againe; What a comfortable stay and support is this unto a distressed soule, to see and finde all in Christ? When a person brought to the true sight and sense of sinne, and loathing and forsaking of it, and to the giving of himselfe up unto Christ shall behold his many fore-past guilts, and see these charged upon Christ, nay and discharged by Christ; nay and so discharged that they shall never bee charged upon him againe; nay and all the consequents of guilt removed, so that Christ hath set him at liberty, he hath made him a free-man, and that against all Satans accusations; hee may hold out the blood of Christ, which will answer all; I am a sinner, but *Christ was made sin for me*; I deserve

serve damnation, but Christ was made a curse for me. If Beleevers did skill the nature, and extent and vertues of remission by the blood of Christ; if they did know, and were possessed more with this part of Justification, they would strengthen their faith, and their comfort more; and their doubtings and fears would sinke more. Be of good comfort, thy sinnes are forgiven thee.

5 One thing more, which I had almost forgotten, falls in, which is this, That the substantiall part of Justification is alike to all Beleevers. What is that? It is this, God for the blood of Christ doth not onely charge the sins of strong beleevers on Christ; but of weake beleevers too, and these onely are not discharged; but those also. True faith in any degree, may take out all the benefits of Justification. For as Justification doth not admit of degrees, no more is it made over to the degrees, but to the truth of faith :—

faith: So that not onely *Abraham*, the father of the faithfull, who was strong in faith, but the father of the childe, who cryed out with tears, *I beleeve, helpe mine unbeleeve*, he also hath all the reall interests, the very same reall interests in the blood of Christ.

You know the arme hath not an interest in the head and influences therof, because it is big, or because it is strong, but because it is a member, by reason whereof the least finger, and weakest member doth also claime and hath a share. So because every Beleever by true faith is made a member of Christ, hee hath therefore a concurrent share in the blood of Christ in the Justification purchased by Christ.

And therefore it is a weaker argument of weake beleevers to deny, or doubt their discharge by Christ.

True, say they, Christ is a strong Saviour, and hath strong merits, and by him is pardon of sinne,
and

and by his Name a person is justified; but this is onely for men of stronger faith then mine.

Sol.

Doe not deceive, nor unnecessarily afflict thy selfe, Christ hath done great matters for great sinners, and a weake faith is a joynt possessor, though no faith can be a joynt purchaser of sins remission.

And thus have I briefly informed you with some notions about that part of Justification, which respects our finnes; there is yet another part, which respects our graces and duties; from the weaknesse and mixture of which, doe arise many doubtings, and such as are not to be disputed down by any thing in our selves, but onely to be answered with the doctrine of Justification.

Ob.

O, saith the humbled sinner, and experienced in himselfe; what a broken estate is here! what an imperfect draught of holinesse! My very light is dim, and in all my duties there is yet undutifulnesse; my righteousness

is defective, in my faith much unbelief, in my prayers much coldness, irreverence, distraction; and when I have sorrowed for my finnes, I may even grieve for grieving no more, and may hate my selfe, that I cannot otherwise hate my finnes: How can I stand before God, who is of purer eyes then to behold sinne? Will the Lord accept of such a person, of such discharging of duties? &c.

Let me stop the complaint, and close up the doubtings with a little more enlargement of the doctrine of Justification: Therefore remember,

1 Our persons stand not before God in their owne righteousness, nor our owne services in their owne strength. Indeed the Lord requires holiness in our natures, and holy duties from us; we are his children, we are his people; therefore wee should bee holy as our Father is holy; therefore the people of his
pasture

pasture should serve him. An unholy Beleever were a monster upon earth, and an undutifull sonne is a plaine unbeleever; for though Christ did dye for those who were once rebellious, yet he dyes for none to make them licentious; So that holinesse, inherent grace is absolutely required to salvation.

To salvation I say,

But to Justification in no wise. What is that? That is, though a man cannot be saved without inherent holinesse, yet is he not justified by it; when he comes to account it with God, he may not say this, Lord, loe, here am I, see if there be any sin in my person, or defect in my holinesse; I have not offended thee, I need not any help, any mercy; my heart is totally cleane; and my duties performed at all times in every respect for matter and manner to the full as thou requirest: Enter into judgement with me if thou pleasest, I will bee tryed by my owne holinesse.

2. But

2 But in the righteousness of Christ, I desire, saith Paul, to be found in him, not having my owne righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. 3. 9. See more if the act in Rom. 5. 19. 1 Cor. 1. 30. 2 Cor. 5. 21. * So called, not as if the act of faith were our justifying righteousness, for that act is but 1. An imperfect thing. 2. A transient thing. 3. A part of inherent holiness: but because faith only layes hold on, & makes us to fly unto & relye on the righteousness of Iesus Christ,

There is such a thing as the * righteousness of faith; it is none other then the righteousness of Christ: (we thinke little of it, we make little use of it; there is a kind of Popery in us all; wee look downward too much on our righteousness for a Justification) and when we are to be pronounced just and righteous, when either we or our services expect acceptation, it is in and by that righteousness of Iesus Christ.

VVhence two things arise to keep doubtings and feares off, viz.

1 That though our holiness be weak, yet Christs is strong; that

And so it
must be, or
else we
could not
truly be
repeated
just.

that righteousness which justifies, is
ful. When we look upon our selves,
Ah Lord! thinke we, How shall
we appeare before God! How
will he accept of us! Such poore,
such weak, such sinfull, hollow
people! I answer, Christs righ-
teousnesse is full, his Coate was
seamlesse; ours is made up, and
strangely cut, but his righteous-
nesse is compleat, and, *He is made*
unto us righteousnesse, yea, and that
of God, 1 Cor. I. 30. God hath set
him out to be our righteousness,
and he justifies us by it.

2 Though our services be weak,
yet wee are justified by Christs
righteousnesse: *Aaron* was to
beare the iniquity of the holy offerings,
Exod. 28. 38. Their holy offerings
had some unholy mixtures; but
Aaron was to beare them, (*i. e.*) he
was to take the iniquities away
from them, and to make the offe-
rings accepted.

Christ is this *Aaron*, who by his
righteousnesse covers all the ble-
mishes, makes up all the weaknes-
ses

ses in holy duties.

Therefore my brethren, in all our approaches to God, we should not doubt. It is the Apostles own argument, *Heb. 10. 21. Having such an High-Priest over the house of God, 22. Let us draw neare with a true heart, in full assurance of faith. And ver, 23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, &c.* It is as if the Apostle had said, If men did know what a Christ they have, what a full righteousness there is in him, what he doth with it, how he justifies their persons, and justifies their services, pleads for them, beautifies them, ingratiates them with the Father, they would not doubt so much as they doe, they would be better perswaded of God, when they come and pray unto him.

I remember the Apostle hath an excellent phrase in *Heb. 9. 24.* that *Christ doth appeare for us.* It is a Metaphor from a Lawyer; If a man hath a Case, he goes to his Law-

Lawyer, and reports all to him, desires him to undertake the whole businesse, and upon the committing of the Case to him, he appears for his Plaintiffe, opens the Case, pleads for him before the Judge, and the Cause is carried: So is it with Christ, he appears for us (i. e.) When a poor sinner, a weak beleever comes to him, and opens his condition, his wants, his infirmities, Christ undertakes for him, he pleads for him, (he ever lives to make intercession) hee moves his Father in his behalfe, brings out his righteousness, his blood and merits, and what hee did and suffered for him, &c. And thus doth Christ for every particular service, duty, and prayer for him who beleeves on him.

The tenth cause of doubtings, was, disputation against the Promises.

O, saith the troubled and fearfull soule, all these promises which you produce, and apply to my

my condition, they are nothing to me, they belong not to me; There is indeed goodnesse, and truth, a wonderfull worth in them, and they suit with my condition exactly, but I may not lay hold on them; I should but presume to take the bread which belongs to children, but not to dogs, not to such a sinner as I am.

Good Christian, doe but track thine owne spirit, or the spirit of any distressed in Conscience, thou shalt finde this to be the last hold usually of unbeliefe, namely, a reasoning against Gods Promises; the which reasoning is sometimes through meere tenderneffe of spirit; as when the soule hath arguments to it selfe of that force, to represent a present incapacity of any good which God hath promised, and till they be removed, it dares not lay hold on the Promises; but if they could be satisfied, then it is drawne in to beleeve: But sometimes there is a reasoning against the Promises, through

through wilfulnesse of spirit, as when all the arguments of a doubting sinner are so clearly resolved, and answered by the expresse words of God, that the person cannot gain-say it; yet the person rather bends still against the Promises, then labours to honour God in them by beleaving. This later reasoning is an irrational way, and unworthy of our abetting; I should thinke such a Christians doubtings to arise rather from a fixed and heaue melancholly, then any other speciall cause. Neverthelesse, somewhat to help the other Christian, who argues and reasoneth against the Promises, meerly out of tendernesse, and fear of his right & title, I would commend a few things to his consideration.

I. No spirituall good is furthered, nor evill weakned by keeping the soule and Gods Promises asunder. Tell me seriously, Is not all our help for soule and body (in the full and whole latitude of it)

it) couched in Gods Promises? Are they not our wells of salvation, and breasts of consolation, our sunne and shield? and what vessel hath a poore sinner to draw with out of those wels? what mouth hath he to milk out those breasts but faith? It is faith which knits the Promises and our conditions together; it is faith which makes them to meet each other; and till the Promises meet (in their vertue and influence) with this condition of thy soule, thou shalt never be helped or bettered by them: Till the plaister and the wound doe meet, it wil never be an helping nor healing plaister. Thou shalt be (*uti eras*) as thou wast, and the promise shall be (*ubi eras*) where it was, it shall never doe thee good till thou dost apply it.

2 It is beleevng which must cleare our title. O, faith the Christian, if I knew that the promises belonged unto me, I would then beleeve; I answer,

First, this is a preposterous course

course, and utterly impossible ; as if there could be any wel-grounded perswasion of our interest, before we have any such interest. No, but personall perswasion is a consequent work, it cannot be the antecedent or leading worke. You must buy the Lands, before you can be perswaded that they are yours.

But secondly, if ever you would cleare your title to the promises, you must then beleeve ; for it is faith which doth intitle you, and gives you interest and propriety. As the Apostle spake of a great good, *After yee beleaved, yee were sealed with the holy spirit of promise, Epbes. 1. 13.* that I say in this case ; If ever you would be perswaded that God scales his Promises unto you, then doe you first put your seale unto the Promises : Beleeve, and then thou shalt see the good of them to be thy good.

3 The ground of a Christians beleeving Gods Promises, must not be in him who is to apply them.

them, but only in him who makes them. O! this is it which gravels, and labyrinths, and still distresseth us, that we set up the grounds of faith in our selves, and not in God. We are loath to acknowledge that the sole ground of beleeving is to be found only in that God who promiseth.

It is said of *Abraham*, when God promised him a childe in his old age, that by faith he gave glory to *Rom. 4. 20* God: But how came he so to doe?

the Text saith, That he considered not his owne body now dead, when he was about an hundred yeares old, nor the deadnesse of *Sarahs* wombe; but he considered him who had promised, and was perswaded that what hee had promised, hee was able also to performe; Why? This is the right course to elicit, or draw out our beleeving: We must not consider our selves, but wee must consider him who promiseth: Our reasons of beleeving must be found in him alone on whom we are to beleeve.

ver. 19

ver. 21

M

There-

Therefore I beseech you to remember, that the Promises of God are not only objects of faith, but they are also grounds of beleeving: They doe not only containe excellent good for us, but likewise the motives to beleeve that good. Besides the goodnesse in them which respectively answers our conditions, and the presenting of that goodnesse unto us by way of gift, there is all reason conjoynd with these, to affect our hearts to lay hold on them, namely,

1 A graciousnesse, that the Lord will freely, and for his own sake doe us all that good.

2 A fidelity, that the Lord who hath graciously promised, will also faithfully performe.

And 3. Sufficiency of power in God, to make good unto us whatsoever word of goodnesse is gone out of his lips.

So that from all these, a Christian against all his doubtings may yet see ground to beleeve
the

the Promises of God; because,

1 The Promises are the Declarations of God for good unto us.

2 They are willing Declarations, arising only from the good will of our God.

3 He dispenseth the good in them to sinners freely, without any worthinesse or desert on their parts.

4 There is not any good promised, which God is not willing or able to make good.

Lastly, let any person beleeve on them, and he shall confesse, that faithfull is that God who promised, and that that God who hath promised cannot lye.

But now on the contrary, If you looke for grounds of beleeving in and from your selves, it cannot be that ever your hearts should be free from doubtings; If either you make your owne worthinesse the cause of beleeving, you shall never come to beleeve: This were not to receive

good from God, but to buy and purchase it; and it is absolutely against the nature of free promises, as also against the disposition of true faith, which empties us of our selves, and seeth the cause of all our good to be only in him who is All-goodnesse.

Or if you think that you must first finde the good in your selves which yee are to fetch from the Promises, you cannot then beleeve, you must unavoydably doubt still: because it is impossible for a sinner, or a needy Christian, ever to draw his helps out of himselfe, or to prevent the promises of God. As he cannot deserve any good from God promising, so he cannot bring any good

Esai. 55. 1 to Gods promises. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come yee to the waters, saith the Prophet, and he that hath no money: Come yee, buy and eat, yea come, buy wine and milk without money, and without price. If thou be a thirsty person, here is all provision freely for thee.

4 Another thing which I would commend also to doubting Christians in this case, shall be this: Take some solid paines to cleare your entrance into Covenant with God; thereby you shall cleare your interest in all particular promises upon your occasions.

There is a gracious Covenant (spoken of in the Scripture) twixt God and his people: Hee makes us to be his people, and we take him to be our God. And when that Covenant is passed twixt God and a person, that there is a mutuall acceptation; then the Lord estates this person into all the particular promises: As when the woman and man enter into the covenant of marriage, now all is settled on her, and she hath title sufficient.

So when the Lord God and a sinner are married to each other, when they are entred into a Covenant, Thou art my God, and none else, my heart is thine, my

Jer. 31. 33.

32. 38.

Ezc. 36. 28

Hos. 2. 23

Heb. 8. 10

life shall be thine, &c. The Lord saith unto such a one, And I am thine, and all my mercy is thine, my Christ is thine, my Promises thine: If thou needest any good for soule or body, all good is thine.

If this
doer were
unlocked,
all the
roomes
would ea-
sily bee
scene.

I assure thee, O Christian, if this were once out of doubt, that thou and God were entred into Covenant, thou wouldst not so much doubt thy title, or question thy right to apply any particular promise to any condition of exigence wherein thou lyest. *All are yours, and yet are Christs, and Christ is Gods,* 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

5 Lastly, consider well, whether there be nothing in a Christ which may not be able to over-argue thy disputes against thy applying of the Promises. I remember that *Luther* in his Commentary on *Genesis* prescribes unto tempted persons one very compendious way to withstand all temptations whatsoever: Let Satan come any way, or the world any

Luthers
speech.

any way, or sinne move any way,
doe thou answer all with this
one ly, *Christianus sum*, I am a
Christian; I may not yeeld to
any sinne, for I am a Christian.
And surely me thinkes this also
might be a compendious way to
resolve the doubtings of a Chri-
stian, *Christum habeo*, I have a
Christ. O Christian, if thou didst
looke more on thy Christ, thou
mightst looke more on the Pro-
mises: When wilt thou remem-
ber, that as there is no com-
fortable looking on God with-
out a Christ, so there will be
no confident looking on the
Promises of God without a
Christ?

No look-
ing on the
Promises
without a
Christ.

Christ Jesus is thy *Jacobs* lad-
der, thy prayers get up by him,
and Gods Promises come downe
by him: *All the promises of God are
Yea and Amen in him, 2 Cor. 1.20.*

There was a Book in the Re-
velation which none of the El-
ders and Worthies could open,
but yet the Lambe could open it:

The Promises are a precious Booke, every leafe drops myrrhe and mercy, yet the weak Christian cannot open it, nāy hee is afraid to open it, and to read his portion there: Neverthelesse thy Christ can open the Promises for thee, and by thy Christ as thou mayst finde a way for heaven her easter, so mayst thou espie a way for thy comfort now.

And why, may Christ reply to the doubting Christian, art thou afraid to beleve? to beleve my Fathers word, and thy Fathers word? Did hee ever faile any who trusted on him? Is hee not willing to give, who was willing to promise? Should hee lose of his glory, if thou receivedst of his grace? Or shouldst thou lose of thy comfort, if thou shouldst beleve in his promise? Dost thou not care for his good? Why then art thou troubled? Or in good earnest, Wouldst thou enjoy that good? Why then dost thou not be-

believe? Thou seest the worth
of the commodity, but stickest
at the price. Did my Father ever
sell grace or mercy to any upon
the price of their owne worthi-
nesse? How canst thou imagine
him to answer thee in justice, who
yet deals with thee upon pro-
mises? And if worthinesse must
be found, tell me, Who am I?
Is a Christ of no worthinesse to
thee? or of no worth with his
Father and thine? I have dyed
for thy soule, I have reconciled
thy person, I have made God
himselfe to bee thine, and there-
fore his Promises to be thine.

• If thou thinkest that God will
start from his word, O thou erreſt;
His Promise is made with Good-
nesse, is sealed with Truth, and
is ratified with my blood.

• If thou thinkest it is an inex-
orable and deafe eare to thy
prayers, yet consider, it is al-
wayes an open and plyable eare
to my merits. Come then, I once
gave my selfe for thee, and since

that I have given my selfe to thee; Be not afraid, O thou of little faith: Locke on mee, and through mee unto a God, so shalt thou see him fully gracious and mercifull, and holding forth the golden Scepter to thee. Look on mee and through mee unto the Promises, then shalt thou see them to bee my purchase, and thy portion. Lay hold on them by faith, and enrich thy selfe with them, in so doing thou shalt please my Father, pleasure thy selfe, and honour thy Saviour.

II The eleventh Spring of doubtings, was, the suspension of divine favour. *Thou didst bide thy face, and I was troubled*, said David. O, the hiding of Gods favour is more then the hiding of the Sun, or then the withdrawments of David from Absalom: It is even the time of our fainting, the sequestration of our soules, and life. *Thy favour is life*; saith David againe.

Here

Here now consider.

I In these times of sequestration, a man hath just cause of trouble; he should be moved at it, that he cannot behold his God in that graciousnesse as before, in that lovingnesse, in that light of his countenance. And verily there is not a Christian really sensible of the divine favour, who should not be as much perplexed in the clouding of it, as hee was affected and gladdened in the rising and discovering of it.

Beloved, it is ill with that man who can equally beare up in the absence, as in the conceived presence of Gods favour; who is of that hard and unperceiving temper, as not to solace his soule in finding God to be gracious; and not to be abundantly disturbed in not apprehending the wonted manifestations of his loving favour. How excessively distressed is the Church in the Canticles, that her Beloved had with--

withdrawne himselfe ! And David doth in the violence of his distemper and jealousie (whether culpably, I know not, yet) strongly charge God (sure with much heavinesse of heart) that hee had forgotten to be gracious.

2. Nevertheless in the times of such suspension, it is an error, and a dangerous error, a fruitlesse error, absolutely to conclude against our God; or against our selves, of any present or hopefull interest in his blessed favour; Therefore remember these particulars.

1. Observe the wayes and times of the interception of divine favour. This is certaine, that God hath ever some speciall end in the holding up of his countenance; and we may, and doe many times give him just cause and reason. In Scripture wee may observe on our part ordinarily two occasions.

I. Some grosse finnes, which in-

indeed are as a thicke cloud to hold up the blessed light of Gods countenance, for he is of purer eyes then to behold sinne. These are the wall of separation, these shut the doore, and draw the curtaines, and doe like some closing rheume fall upon the eye, and indispose it to the comfortable enjoyment of the light: As wee may see in *Dauids* two great sinnes of Adultery and Murder, they did suspend the presence, (*i. e.*) the comfortable presence of God, and held up the joy of his salvation, which hee did so earnestly desire to be restored, *Psal.*

51. 11, 12.

2 Remisnesse and carelesnesse in our esteems and affections towards him in his Ordinances. When Christians come to a moderation, to a cooling of their spirituall fervour, to a more negligent acquaintance with God, and a more indifferent performance of holy services and duties; then the Lord holds back,

and

and calls in the sensible light of his countenance : As a father doth alter the set of his looks towards his childe, who is wanton upon his love, and lets downe the diligence of his just observance and duty.

See this in Cant. 5.2. *Open to mee (saith Christ) my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled.* Here was a gracious intreaty, and full of wooing compellations : What doth the Church now ? Surely she stirs, she riseth, she runneth, she easily imbraceth these calls of Christ ; No, vers. 3. *I have put off my coat, how shall I put it on ? I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them ?* What is this ? She was carelesse, negligent, full of excuses, so those phrases import, of putting off the coat : For as the keeping on of cloaths was a signe of care and watchfulnesse, [*Nebem 4.23.*] so the putting them off was a signe of drowziness, of a disposition prepared for sleep or rest : Nay (shee had washed

washed her feet) which was another signe of her sleepy and negligent disposition; It being the manner in those hot Countries (where ordinarily they went bare-footed) to wash their feet after their travel, and so prepare themselves to rest. The meaning of all which, is this: She made many pretences and delays; all which did spring from an acquired sluggishnesse and remittensse of spirit.

Now marke the issue, Though the Church did not rise to open, yet Christ, vers. 4. puts in his hand at the hole of the doore: (i.e.) Though shee had neglected him in his Ministry, yet he sent into her heart a notable token of it by his Spirit, and then her bowels were moved for him. Why? What is the matter? Now she rose, vers. 5. and opened the doore, vers. 6. But my Beloved had withdrawn himselfe, and was gone; I sought him, but could not finde him; I called him, but he gave me no answer.

Here

Here you see, that carelesnesse of duty causeth absence of favour: And when men are negligent in the entertainments of the meanes of grace, God doth in a just wisdom goe off with the sensible presence of his gracious favour.

2 Observe the wayes of regaining Gods favour suspended from us: What are those, will you say?

3 I answer:

1 Be affected for the losse; every absence of Gods countenance should trouble us, but the losse of his favour that should grieve us. So was it with the Church there, Cant. 5. 4. *My bowels were troubled for him; Or, my bowels sounded, rumbled, made a troublous noise.* What doe these words intimate but an eminent disquietnesse; an hearty sorrow for so great a losse, springing from so great a remisnesse? I say an eminent disquietnesse; For where bowels are mentioned, there an eminent degree is suggested, either of com-

miseration; as in that of God to *Epbraim*, *Jer.* 31. 20. or of singular love and affection, as of the mother to the childe, or of most sorrowfull affliction, as here.

Nay, so great was this sorrow and bewailment, that *vers.* 6. her soule failed when he spake; *My soule failed* (i.e.) my soule went forth, it was gone, it departed, because of the departure of Christs loving favour: For as the heart is said to goe forth, when men are astonished with feare, so the soule is said to goe away, when men are surcharged with griefe and sorrow. Whence it is evident, that the Church was almost dead for her folly and negligence, whereby shee had caused her Christ to withdraw himselfe.

And surely if negligent, and regardlesse entertainments of God, or Christ, or his Word, (which cause the cessation of favour) are thus abundantly bewayled with bowels and faintings,

ings, how much more should the bowels be doubled, and the measures of griefe and repentance be swelled, when the suspension of Gods love and favour is caused by our injurious handling of his blessed Spirit, by fighting against his motions, and presuming against the directing and convincing light, to dishonour and grieve him with the most foule iniquities.

Yet if wee can humbly and throughly bemoane our losse, and repent of our sinnes, we shall behold the Lord in mercy and love againe. David could not but yeeld out the countenance of his favour to *Absalom*, though an untoward sonne: If the clouds did breake, the Sonne would shine againe; for God will not only give, but restore comforts to his mourners.

2 Revive thy uprightnesse, and then God will renew his favour. A good man (saith *Salomon*, Prov. 12. 2.) obtaineth favour of the Lord:

Lord: (i. e.) An upright man, a man whose heart is single, (for he is opposed to the man of many devices) whose heart is single and plaine with God in his walkings, such a man shall obtaine favour from the Lord.

David assures us of it, *Psa. 5. 12* Thou Lord wilt blesse the righteous, and with favour wilt thou compasse him as with a shield. It was a good speech of Davids, *Psal. 36. 9* With thee is the fountaine of life, and in thy light shall we see light. *g. d.* Lord, thou hast comfort and favour enough, thy favour indeed is life, the very fountaine of it, and in the light of thy paths shall the sonnes of men see the light of thy favour.

For, brethren, we cannot see light by darknesse, light must be seen by light; and whatsoever is contrary to light, is an impediment of seeing. Gods favour cannot be seen by any thing which is contrary to Gods nature. Crooked hearts, and crooked wayes,

Psa. 17. 15
I will be-
hold thy
face in up-
rightness.
Note.

wayes, an heart and an heart, a tongue and a tongue, a life and a life, (i. e.) a doubling heart, and a doubling tongue, and a doubled conversation, which hath a veine of sinfulness and approbation, this the Lord hates and abhorres; for God is ever single in all his dealings with men: They shall have mercy, or they shall not have it; and so he exceedingly delights in the simplicity of Christians: Let them deal ingenuously with him, give him all the might they have, and him only, though they have not a present sight, yet they have a sure promise of his favour.

The Lord will meet them, *Esa.* 64. 5. *Thou meetest him that rejoyceib and worketh righteousness, those that remember thee in thy wayes. Walke thou towards God in uprightness, and God will walke towards thee in comfortableness. Be thou a sonne, and he will be a Father; give him thy heart, and he will shew to thee his face.*

There-

Therefore let us cast about, not only for our generall, but also for the services of our particular callings and relations, in which if the Lord sees us upright in walking, we shall assuredly finde him to be gracious in distributing the beames of his favour unto our soules.

3 Earnestly seeke Gods favour.

1 Seeke it by enquiries in the ordinances of his favour. Saw yee him whom my soule loveth? said the Church in her losse, Cant. 3. 3. unto the Watch-men. And as Mary, Job. 20. 13. weeping, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him; And ver. 15. Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. What came of this? See verse 16. Jesus saith unto her, Mary; It was one only word. but enough to make her turne her selfe, and say, Rabboni. So may it, and so doth it oft-times fall out with us, in our seekings of Gods favour,

favour, The Lord doth meet us, and shew himselfe, with his loving countenance, in his Ordinances : For these Ordinances of God, they are the Exchange, the heavenly Exchange twixt God and his people, wherein they present unto him their duty, and he conferres on them his grace and favour ; So that they who have come hither with sighs, *O that God would be my God !* have returned with Psalms of joy, *The Lord is my God, and my Father, I will praise thee, O Lord my God.*

2 Seeke it by prayers. How abundant is *David* in this kind ? *Psal. 106. 4. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour that thou bearest unto thy people, O visit me with thy salvation. 5. That I may see the good of thy chosen. So Psal. 31. 16. Make thy face to shine upon thy servant. So Psal. 4. 6. Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us : For God hath promised his favour, and therefore his people may seek his favour. Nay, he hath commanded his*

people to seeke his favour, and therefore they should seek it. See *Psal. 27. 8.* Thou saidst, *Seek yee my face, My heart said unto me, Thy face (Lord) will I seek.* It is an unadvised folly in the suspension of Gods favour, to unsonne our selves, and unpeople our selves, (*i. e.*) to deny that grace and spirituall relation twixt us and God. This is not the way to gain favour, for when wee have undone our relations of children, we exclude our selves from the expectations of favour; No, the wisest and surest way is to seeke the renewing of Gods loving countenance, and say as *David*, *Lord, thou hast hid thy face, and I am troubled, yet thou biddest me to seek thy face, and, Thy face (Lord) will I seek:* Nay I doe seeke it, for *Thy favour is life, nay, Thy favour is better then life;* so I esteeme it, so I acknowledge it, and as my life, as that which is a life unto my life do I earnestly desire it; therefore, *Lord, Make thy face to shine,*
and

and behold me againe, as thou beholdest
thy people with thy ancient favour: O
visit me with thy salvation, and let me
see the good of thy countenance.

Now here take in two helpfull
advices more, viz.

Two
things to
beremem-
bred in our
seeking of
Gods fa-
vour.

THE When you seek the light of
Gods countenance, doe not blind
your eyes; Remember still, that a
man who will shut his eyes, shall
hardly finde: Now nothing can
see Gods favour but the eye of
faith, for in Christ Jesus only we
see, and discern him our gracious
God and Father; therefore keep
open that eye. The direct work-
ings of faith can alwayes see God,
and the reflexive, will at length
see God to be my God. When
thou comest unto him thus, Lord,
I doe need, I doe prize, I doe de-
fire thy favour and countenance,
and thou hast promised it, but
thou wilt not keep thy promise,
thou wilt never shew the light of
thy countenance to my soule
more; now though wee seeke
much, no marvaile we finde not,
and

Simile.

the Heavens to open; you must use the key, as well as the hands, if you will come in and see the rooms: Our hands of Prayer must use the key of Faith, if wee would open the countenance of God towards us; for faith is that which gives us our sights of God, and Christ.

2 Judge not of the issue by what thou feelest, but by what God promiseth; and in case therefore that God doth not shew thee his ancient love presently, or easily, yet knock againe, and provoke thy heart to out-beleeve all reasonings of feare and corruption.

As David, Psal. 42. 11. *Why art thou cast downe, O my soule? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him, who is the help of my countenance, and my God.*

O my God, saith he, in vers. 6. of that Psalm, my soule is cast downe within me (no question but for the absence of Gods favour, verse 7.

N

My

My rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? therefore (saith he) will I remember thee. Remember him, O David. What encouragements so to doe. Thy rocke seemeth to forget thee, and all his waves and billows are gone over thee, thou art in a tossed, and forgotten condition, and yet thou sayest, I will remember thee. Now see vers. 8. Yet the Lord will command his loving kindnesse in the day time, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

g. d. It is true, these afflictions and sorrows are upon me, and God seems to forget me for present, yet I will remember him, I know hee thinkes on me, he hath loving kindnesse, and hee will command it, he can shew it when he pleaseth, I shall assuredly have it, perhaps in the day time, perhaps in the night time, and therefore day and night will I seeke him, for his loving kindnesse, I will remember him.

Ob.

But how may one support himselfe

selfe in the interims of this suspension of divine favour? Can one be good, who is thus? Or will God doe good, or doth hee thinke any good of such a one?

How to support our selves in the interim.

I answer, you may support your selves thus: Sol.

- 1 By remembring the dayes of old, Psal. 77. 7. *Will the Lord cast off for ever, and will he be favourable no more? 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious? This is mine infirmity.*

g.d. For me thus to conclude, that God will not be favourable and gracious unto me, because I feele him not so, this is my weaknesse, and sinfull error: But how then will you support your selfe? See vers. 10. *I will remember the years of the right hand of the most*

Higb, 11. I will remember thy wonders of old. And assuredly the remembrance of what God hath done, is able to support us with a confident expectation of what God will yet doe for us.

I had his favour once, and am in it still, and shall have it againe.

If wee remember the dayes of

old, the method of Gods former proceedings and behaviours towards us, we shall acknowledge, and so comfort our selves, that when he withdrew, it was a withdrawalment either of necessity or expediency, and his loving countenance hath risen againe without a cloud, after a night of sorrow, after a day of seeking.

For the suspensions of his favour are temporary, though his truths be eternall. *I will come againe*, saith Christ: And, *it was but a little* (said the Church, Cant: 3.4.) *that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soule loveth.*

2 Thou art in favour, though thou feelest none: And though thy comfort be in the feeling of it, yet thy happinesse is in the being of it: Thou art saved because God loves, not because thou perceivest that love.

2 Tim. 2. 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure, the Lord knoweth who are his. He knoweth them in respect of the freenesse of his election,*

election, and in respect of the immobility of his affection; He knowes them still, but they know not him still. *Is Ephraim my deare sonne?* Jer. 31.20.q.d. He is so, but he thinks I thinke not so.

Sometimes the walking child holds the parent, and sometimes the parent holds the child, there is safety in both respects, for whiles either I hold, or am held, I am safe: So is it with us and God, sometimes we lay hold on him by faith, sometimes (nay all times) he layes hold on us by his love; our salvation is in this, that we are Gods, and God is ours; that he hath our hearts, and wee his love, though alwayes wee see it not.

3 Thou shalt have favour, though now it bee drawne up: He will behold thy upright heart, and thou shalt see his face with joy, Esa. 45. 3. *In a little while I bid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kinde-*
 N 3 *nesse*

nesse will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.

Therefore the Church elegantly, Micah 7:8. Rejoyce not against me, O mine enemy; when I fall, I shall arise; when I sit in darknesse, the Lord shall bee a light unto mee. 9 He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his righteousness. Remember this one thing, Upright, and beleeying persons have alwayes a favourable God, though they have not alwayes the sense of Gods favour; yea though Satan doe testifie the contrary, which is the next spring of doubtings, and comes in now fitly to be handled.

12 A twelfth spring of doubtings, was, the crediting of Satans testimony about our spirituall condition, and interests in God and Christ; to which if any distressed Christian doth hearken and attend, hee shall never bee freed from inquietations, and rowlings of minde, because Satans testimony is ever directly
or

or obliquely against the truth
and comfort of our spirituall
estate.

For the remedy and cure of
which spring, be pleased seriously
to consider of these subsequent
conclusions.

I The finall tryall of our eter-
nall estate doth immediately and
solely appertaine to the Court of
heaven. Indeed the disquisitive
part belongs to us, but the deci-
sive part belongs to God : Wee
ought to search and prove our
selves, but no man hath imme-
diate power to decide his estate,
by acquitting or condemning
himselſe. This must bee done by
the voice of God in his revealed
Word, which commands and for-
bids, and therefore absolves or
binds.

A twofold
triall of a
mans
estate.

No subject you know hath
this power, to release or binde
of himselſe, but that is the royall
prerogative of the King. It is
true, if the Word condemne us,
then our consciences may doe so

too; and if the word absolve us, so may our consciences too; But this is *virtute prima*, not *virtute propria*; It is because the Word doth it, not because Conscience of it selfe without the Word can doe either rightly.

Whence two things arise to informe and direct us, viz.

Satans
judging is
but usur-
ped.

I Satans judgement of our estate is but usurped: It doth not belong to him to sit upon our soules: It is against the Law of Nations, that the same party should be witnesse and judge: And wee may say to him truly, what the Pharisees proudly objected to Christ, *By what authority doth bee these things?* Or as they to Moses, *Who made thee a Judge over us?* Assuredly the enemy of salvation is not to bee the Judge of it, he being so maliciously vowed against our happinesse, it is most unfit for him to decide it; and therefore though he usurps a judgement upon Christians, yet as David spake in another case, *Thou*

Thou Lord wilt not leave the righteous when he is judged: no assuredly, Satan shall one day be judged for taking upon him the judging of Gods people: And doe you thinke that Satan will give a true judgement unto us of our spirituall condition, who dares give in false evidence before God himselfe of Job, and who is said to accuse the brethren before God day and night?

2 No testimony is to bee admitted, which is contrary to the judgement of the Word; *Beleeve not every spirit, 1 Joh. 4. 1. but try the spirits whether they are of God.* The Word must judge us another day, and therefore it is to judge of us now. Satans judgement is usurped, and our owne is oftentimes erroneous, as in wicked and presumptuous sinners, who sentence well for their safety, although God doth proclaime and pronounce bitter woes unto them.

All judgement of our states being contrary to the Word, is false.

And as our judgements are oftentimes erroneous, so are they in the

times of distresse, suspicious and hasty: We doe not testifie of our selves with judgements cleared, and totally informed by the Word, of all our estate, but with judgements affected and distempered; as *David* in his fit, *I am cast out of thy presence*; God did not cast him off, but his distempered judgement did cast him out.

2 Maintaine the judgement of the Word, against all judgement: when a man hath thoroughly viewed and pierced into the secrets of his heart and wayes, by the informing light of Gods blessed Spirit, and takes his flesh and spirit asunder, I meane his sins, weakneses, graces and dispositions, and layes these, with all he knowes of himselfe, before the Lord in a most sincere ingenuity, so that if he were now to dye, he durst venture the eternall salvation of his soule, with his God, that he keeps nothing back, either of what is his owne by nature, or of what is Gods by grace:
If

If now the Word decides for him that his condition is heavenly, his heart is upright, he is indeed one who is truly interested in Christ; this man or woman should now uphold this decisive testimony of the Word, lay it up as the great copy of his eternall salvation; and in case of opposite verdict and testimony, not molest himsele with reasoning and doubting, but to preserve the authority of Gods testimony, by beleiving, and most upright walking with God in all the powers of duty.

There yet remaine two springs of doubtings to bee cured, and then I have done with that subject.

13 The thirteenth spring of doubtings, was, the new rising of old sins: This I told you could not but amaze the soule, to see the dead rise out of the Grave againe, and to read the debt as if it were not yet crossed: It doth exceedingly disquiet us about our spiri-

spirituall condition. Now consider,

Five times
in which
former sins
may revive

1 There are five times when we and our sins doe meet.

1 One is the day of our legall humiliation, when the Law, like searching Phisick, enters deepe, stirs up the evil humour, casts our sins into our very faces, and sets them in order before us, and reproves us for them, with undeniable conviction and horreur.

2 Another is, the day of our piercing afflictions, when the Lord doth send his messengers of wrath unto us, cuts off from us our delights, teares away our joyes, crosseth us in our aimes, and we see God hewing our friends from us, our children from us, our earthly delights and contents : for miserable evils are oft-times a cause to make us see our sinfull evils : We doe many times come to perceive our faults, by our punishments : As Pharaoh did, when the plagues were on him, *I have done evill in not listening the people*
goe :

goe : And *Balaam*, when he saw the Angel, and heard him threatning, *I will now returne* : And so the children of *Israel*, then saw, and confessed their murmuring, and stubbornesse, when God sent evill Angels amongst them, (*i. e.*) some messengers of his wrath and displeasure.

3 A third is, the time of some horrible and common judgement, whether it be upon particular persons, or a Nation, interested in the same guilt of sinne with our selves; For this is a time of common fire, which raging and flying up and downe, makes men run into their closets, and bring out their concealed jewels; so doe common and extraordinary judgements return us into our selves, and gives up unto us those our hidden finnes which we feare will draw the same fire of judicall wrath upon our owne persons. I doe not doubt but at the last great Plague, many of the sinfull botches. broke out, upon a
feare.

feare lest that judicall botch should have broken in upon your bodies and houses.

4 A fourth time is, the time of death? for though sin and a sinner really meet in all their course of life, yet sense of sin and a sinner doe not alwayes meet untill the day of death; for death is a strict and unavoydable summons to give up our accounts, and then the unjust Steward must looke about him, how he shall answer his most just Lord and Master.

This time of meeting, evidently manifests it selfe to our owne experience; who though we have kindled our sinnes in the time of our health and strength, yet have wee not met with the flashes of them but in the times of sicknesse and weaknesse.

5 A last time of meeting is, the day of Judgement; and this is a most certaine and infallible time; It is possible for a man to escape the legall meeting, by conviction; and the miserable meeting, by afflicti-

afflictions, judgements, and death
it selfe; (for some dye like *Nabal*,
they live wretchedly, and dye
senselessly) but at the Day of
Judgement, they and their sinnes
must meet, and shall; because then
the secrets of all hearts shall bee
disclosed, and Gods righteous
judgement shall be evident to the
hearts of all the world. Whence
it is, that in this day of meeting,
they shall cry unto the mountaines to
fall on them, and the rocks to bide them
(but in vaine) from the wrath of
him who sits upon the throne.

2 There are severall causes of the
rising of sin: Some are on Gods
part, some on our part, some on
Satan.

Divers
causes of
sins rising
afresh.

1 For Gods part; God doth
many times cause our former sins
to rise, by the power of his mighty
spirit in the ministry of his
Word: For whereas the sinner
would hush his feares, and griefs,
and Conscience asleep, yet the
Lord will not have it so; he doth
rub the sore, and gall the Con-
science,

science, makes it sensible of the guilt and wounds; he doth pierce by the two-edged sword of his Word, even to the dividing asunder of soule and spirit, and of the joynts and marrow, and discernes the very thoughts and intents of the heart. He meets the person oft-times many yeares after the commission of the sins, and most expressly revives and remembers them in all the acting circumstances, which the sinning person either had, or would have buried in silence and forgetfulnesse.

2 For our part : Thus there is double cause of new rising of old sins, one whereof is good, and the other is bad.

1 A new commission of the old sins, which brings back upon us the sting of the old guilt; for relapses into the disease, occasion a relapse of the burden and ache : Cut thy finger againe, and it will smart againe; fall into thy Ague againe, it will make thee shake againe; Relapses have ever this
judge.

judgement with them, that they make a fresh wound, and the old also to bleed againe. You know in some Wells there are two buckets, put downe the one, and you bring up the other; so the falling into the same sin againe, brings up the old burden againe.

2 Renewed humiliations; for then we doe voluntarily looke back upon our former accounts, that thereby we may more humbly sue out a totall discharge. Though we may sin the sinne over no more, yet we may weep it over and over; and though the acting of it may be no more, yet the bewailing of it should last us ever.

Though we may not revive sinne to practise it, yet we may to mourne for it.

3 On Satans part, who like an envious and malicious wretch never gives over to throw unto us our errors and failings, though corrected with truest reformation. So Satan, who is the great cause and incentive to sinne, will not cease after our truest repentance, to vex, and sad, and (if he could,

could, to) despaire our hearts with the fresh memory of former and forsaken sins ; so that we seldom or never lay hand on a blessed promise , or gaine our selves into the comfortable favour of God, or delight our selves in the sweet peace of Conscience, but he falls in, and checks, and troubles us with the representations of former sins, and perchance makes us let goe our gracious hold, with the feares, and suspicions, and chargements of former guilts.

3 Now according to the variety of the causes, fetching up upon us our former guilts, must we deliver unto you severall helps and remedies.

The ends
of reviving
of sin.

Consider therefore, on Gods part, there are severall ends in respect of severall persons, why he brings on the sinnes againe.

I To make the ground-worke more deep and sure : Wee make our tents too short for our wounds ;

wounds; We sin much, and defile
our selves much, and we thinke
that a little washing will serve
the turne. O! this businesse of
selfe triall, of laying the axe to
the root of the tree, of diving
into the secrets of sin, of applying
the corrasives unto the core and
heart of our natures, this goes a-
gainst us, we are quickly weary
of it.

Indeed, some trouble, and some
bitternesse we grant to be conve-
nient; but to be still accusing our
selves before God, stil to be lashing
and wounding our hearts for
wounding of God; Ah, this, this
goes against us.

You shall see people sometimes
very sensible of their diseased bo-
dies: O now some Physicke were
good, they finde such aches, such
distempers, surely some Physicke
were good; and some they take,
which makes them excessively sick;
but then away with it, no more
physick: yet at length the disease
comes upon them againe, and the
Physi-

Physician prescribes more physick, even that which must goe to the root of the disease, which though it makes them more sicke, yet it procures their safety, and better health.

Beloved, God would have men, (perhaps) a longer space to sit upon their sins; they stint themselves after great sinnes, and make themselves friends with God presently. Now the Lord knowes that this skinning of the sore will spoil all, & therefore after a short time he returnes them their sins againe, makes conscience to startle at the guilt againe, and deals with us as the skilfull Chirurgion with a man whose leg is broken, and ill set, he breaks it againe, that it may be well set.

So doth the Lord, he breaks our soules againe with the guilt of sins; He will make us know, that we must bring him more broken hearts; we shall know what it is to sin against him, and shall not make a reall & lasting peace without

at a sound & solid humiliation:
And truly this is the great mercy
of his wisdom to work thus;
for hereby he makes our foundation
low, and sure, and hereby he
prevents subsequent stirres, and
makes way for our surer and more
comfortable apprehensions and
applications of his love in Christ.
You know that a wise Schoole-
master, when a boy skips from a
hard lesson to that which is more
easie, he puts him back again, and
makes him say it over and over,
ere he takes it forth. Men think to
be catching at Christ, however
they love to lay load on him, and
throw their vile burdens upon
him, though perhaps they never
yet weighed their vile finnings,
and dishonourings of God; but
the Lord will turne them back a-
gaine, he will take off these prag-
maticall presumers, and set them
to learne their first lesson better:
He will make them more sensible
of their vile hearts, and waies, and
actions; they shall not so easily
come

come off from their accursed transgressions; the Lord will hold up the comfortable answer of his favours; and the sweet tastes of the Lord Jesus Christ, and make them againe to sit downe in bitter sorrow for piercing the Lord Christ, and shedding his blood, and grieving of his Spirit, and all that men might bee more humbled, and more really fitted for Christ.

2. To make us more humble: I assure you oft-times our very victories make us proud, and that very grace which should be a cause to abase us, occasionally and accidentally is a means to puffe us: we rise too often above our selves, beyond measure: And therefore as to *Paul* there was given a sting to abase him, lest he should be over-exalted; so to many Christians the Lord doth returne unto them the sensible sting of some notable guilt, to abase their hearts, to put them in minde of themselves.

And that we might bestow our tears, & not our tongues on others sinning.

For

For this reduction of former guilt, it gives up unto us our base and treacherous natures, and the births of our owne hearts; Ah! saith such a person, this heart, this nature of mine, what was it? what is it, if the Lord leave it? See here the grapes the soure grapes of this wild-vine, little reason have I to be so highly conceited of my selfe, as long as I perceive such loathsome accounts and issues from my selfe.

And verily, it makes us oft-times to despise our selves, to abhor our selves in dust and ashes: And this is one great end & use which the Lord makes of former sins, To keepe the heart in a very humble frame: we must have something or other still put unto us of our own, which will let us see how foolish we are by nature, that is *David's* phrase, and how brutish we were, that is *Solomons* phrase.

Our present graces make us good, and the sense of former sins keeps us humble

3 To make us more carefull: For the sharp remembrance of sin

Remem.
bring the
gall and
the worm-
wood.
Lam. 3.

fin doth in a godly heart worke stronger detestation, and stronger watchfulnesse : God doth make their new considerations to bee their present preventions ; Future commissions of sin, are many times prevented by new impressions of former sins.

What ? should I sinne thus againe ? saith the humble heart ; have I not reason to crush these births ? to crucifie that bitter root, to pray against it, to watch against it, to resist it, to deny it, which hath beene, and is now a sword in my conscience ?

But now consider that there is a double carefulnesse wrought by the new rising of sin.

I One respects the guilt of it, and here our care is to get our acquittance renewed and enlarged. O how doth the Lord by these risings of sin, soon cause the soule to rise up in suing out his grace and favour ! It causeth many a teare, many a prayer, many a wrestling with God, many pres-
sings

sings upon the promises, many an earnest beseeching to have our pardon and discharge more fully sealed unto our consciences, by the blood of Jesus Christ, and testimony of the Spirit.

2 Another respects the finnes themselves, in their corrupt qualities, and inclinations, and motions; and this is a greater study against them: firmer resolutions, strengthening of covenants, confirmations of grace, of circumspection, of detestation, of resistance, of any thing or way by which the powers of sin may bee more subdued and cast down.

4 To make us more thankful; Perhaps the Lord hath pardoned those sins which rise anew in thy heart; they doe not alwayes rise, because God hath not discharged their guilt, but because thou hast not discharged thy new debt; they arise as a debt, for the discharge of a debt; as wee use to put men in minde of their former miseries, not that thereby they are made

miserable, but because thereby they should be made thankfull. Beloved, to have former sins discharged, it is mercy, I say mercy, yea and a rich mercy, greater then to give a condemned person life, or to give an imprisoned person liberty, far greater : No such mercy as that which blots out our sins, which saves a soul from hell, and gives it pardon and life. Now great mercies should be answered with great thankfulnesse : Thou didst, in the sense and sting of thy guilt, goe with an heavy heart, with bitter sighs, with deep oppressions, O that I had mercy ! O this burden ! O this wound ! O this sin ! Yea, and with deepe protestations; If the Lord will but pardon it; If he wil shew me mercy; If he would receive me graciously, he should have the calves of my lips, I would love him indeed, I would serve him, I would praise and thanke him, I would speake good of his name, I would say, *Who is a God like him, that forgiveth*

*iniquities, transgressions and sins, and
passeth by the sins of his people?*

Well, the Lord hath shewed
himselſe like himſelſe, a God very
gracious and mercifull; but wee
perhaps have shewed our ſelves
like our ſelves, in diſtreſſes, earneſt
and full of promiſes; but in our
exemptions, flat, and full of for-
getfulneſſe. Now the Lord doth
exceedingly diſlike this vanity
and doubling of heart; he loves
that mercy ſhould bee ſtill ac-
knowledged to bee mercy? hee
would have us to looke backe, as
well as to looke up, and to give
him thanks for that mercy, for
which not long ſince wee would
have given all the world, and our
ſoules too: And therefore doth
he caſt unto us our accounts, hee
lets us thereby ſee what they were
and what they have done, that
we may confeſſe our errour for
not anſwering great mercy with
great thankfulneſſe.

But perhaps you will inquire,
What if we our ſelves for our part

be the cause of reviving of former guilt, and sting of former sins?

I answer, If it be by way of humiliation, to seek the pardon, and to make confession to the God of mercy, and to get victory over them, this should no way discourage us; for this is no more hurt or prejudice to the soul, then the after laying open of the wound to the Chirurgion to dresse and cure it, is prejudicial to the safety & welfare of the body.

Sol.

But if it be by way of commission, either by relapsing into the same sins, or multiplying of sinne in another kinde (both which will dig up again our buried and forepast guilts) then I know no way of peace and safety, no way to allay these renewed accusations and stings, but by renewed sorrow and repentance. And verily what I delivered unto you heretofore about recovery from relapsing, that is the course presently to bee taken here: O let us haste in before the Lord with hearts

hearts trickling down with tears
of blood; for old and present
wounds; the very abundance of
sorrow; the bitterness of griefe,
the art of selfe-affliction. I cannot
say that sorrow of sorrow, that
hatred of hatred, that indignation
of indignation, that revenge of
revenge, that repentance of repen-
tance, which are here necessarily
required, and that too with longest
continuance. Do what thou wilt,
-shaffle off, but to thy selfe a peace,
thou shalt never have it; thy finnes
shall ever and anon gall, and vexe,
and wound thee, until thou hast re-
-newed thy bitterness of most
humbled sorrow for renewing of
thy filthinesse and basenesse of thy
audacious sinning.

But then suppose, that Satan *Ob.*
through his malicious art doth
revive our former guilt by his ac-
-centations. For our greater inter-
-ruption and disquietment; what
is now to be done?

I will shew you here briefly two *Sol.*
things.

1 One is, how you may know that the reviving of former guilt be from Satan or no.

2 Another is, what is then to be done by us?

1 You may know that your sins are revived by Satan, from two effects.

How to
know
whether
Satan re-
vives for-
mer sins

1 One is from the desperate issues of their reviving: you may know whether a man be a friend, of a malicious enemy, who doth revive the errors and failings among men; a friend, he revives them that you may be bettered, either to reforme, if the thing be evill, or to be circumspect whether the thing be true or false; but the malicious enemy hee revives them, onely to make you odious and loathsome. Now Satans reviving of former sins is ever odious, it is of evill for evill, his end is desperate: What is that? That is, that we might give up all possible interests in mercy, all hope of pardon and acceptance. Whence it is, where he revives
sins,

sins, former sins, hee bends the heart to some present mischief, to renounce all hope of mercy, and to selfe-murder, and such desperate issues; both which are against the ends of God, and the desires of an holy heart, which upon their reviving of sinne, doe ever propose mercy and betterment unto the soule.

2 Another is from the filthy issues, which is this; He revives the sting of sinne, that hee may make us more bold and mad in sinning: He revives sin unto sin, there is no hope of mercy, of recovery, therefore as good to go on as not; Whence he inclines the heart to a leaping into the water, to a wallowing in the mire, to a greedinesse in the course of sinning, which he doth the more easily win from the evill hearts of evill men, by those temporary allayments and cessations of stinging guilt, which they observe in themselves, by their furiousnesse, constant, and hardening revolu-

tions, or exercise of the same sin.

So that if you, whose hearts are tender, have been humbled for former sins, and are so upright as still to hate them, if former guiles be revived with an inclination either to give up all mercy, or to give over yourselves now with licentiousness to the same or other sins: here is Satan in this, Satan now revives thy guilt, and now another course is to be taken.

2 The course then is this, and I beseech you mark it;

1 Strengthen thy heart with more detestations of the sins; the more he revives the guilty accusation, the more do thou revive thy upright detestations: And as he poures out malice to disturbe thy conscience, so doe thou pour out revenge to subdne the grounds of it; and if he vexeth thee, doe thou goe and vexe thy sins.

Thy case
is not wic-
ked, be-
cause a

2 Beleeeve not a malicious accuser: Satan doth oft-times serve a Writ in the Kings name, without the Kings seal; he forgives where

God

God doth not, and he binds where
God hath released: And this
know, *It is God that justifieth, who
is he that condemn?* If the King him-
self hath pardoned thee, how un-
just is it for the under-officer to
arrest and challenge? *and guide*
3. But in case of frequent in-
quietations, when Satan will not
be answered, but still chargeth,
now make thine appeale from
him to God; and if hee charge
thee in the Court of Conscience,
remove it wisely to the higher
Court of heaven; let God once
more have the hearing, (and the
deciding. And now Satan, what
hast thou to say unto me? Thou
hast sinned heretofore. (saith Sa-
tan) and thy Judge doth know
the truth of this indictment. I
have. (Satan) I confesse it, and my
God doth know the truth of my
sorrow and repentance. Lord,
dost thou not know my tears, my
returnings, my judgings of my
selfe, my seekings of mercy and
grace? Lord thou hast known it,

wicked
Devill
saith so.

The Chri-
stian must
appeale.

and hast known my soul with thy
pardoning and accepting mercy.

4. Rest the soul, and fasten it un-
to the blood of Christ, which will
alwayes cry downe the testimo-
nies and clamours of guilt; No-
thing but that will satisfie God,
and vanquish Satan; and then by
faith, not only lay hand on mer-
cy, but hold out the stability of
mercy. The Kings pardon will
serve twenty yeares hence in case
of suit. Satan may often trouble
and question, but Gods accepting
of thee into mercy, wil (I am sure
it may) quiet and uphold thee.

14 The last spring of doubtings
was, silence in the Conscience,
long silence there.

For the closing of this spring,
and with it, this subject of doub-
tings, observe these particulars in
a word.

1 The speech of Conscience,
what that is.

2 The speechlesnesse of Con-
science, what and how.

3 To make Conscience speake
again

again, what required.

4 To support our selves in the times of its silence, what can and may.

1 The speech of Conscience:

The speech of conscience, what.

This is no more then its testimony for us, or against us ; for Conscience is intimate with our secret frames, and intentions, and motives, and actions : By its naturall light it can tell much, by implanted light more, by renewed and sanctified light, most of all. Now the speech of Conscience for us, is nothing else but an approbation of our estate, answerable to the Word, acquiting us against all feares and objections that we are the sons of God, that we are truly changed, that we sincerely love him, beleeve in Christ, and walke before him ; for really the voyce of Conscience is but the eccho of the voyce of the Word, and saith that unto us touching our particular, what the Word delivers in the generall. Its voyce is but the Assumption, and the voyce of the Word.

Word is but the Proposition:
 The Word saith, that should be;
 and Conscience saith, here it is:
 The Word requires such and such
 things in a man to be saved, and
 who is in favour with God, and
 Conscience brings them out, and
 answers for the person.

The
 speechles-
 nesse of
 conscience
 what it is,

2 The speechlesnesse, or silence
 of Conscience, is the suspension
 of its determining and acquitting
 acts touching our estate in gene-
 rall, or touching some particular
 doubts: Sometimes Conscience
 calls upon us, and sometimes we
 call upon conscience. In matters
 of direction to practise or forbea-
 rance, we usually heare a reall &
 inward word, Do it not, or, Thou
 mayst doe it: In after doubts
 we call upon Conscience for its
 testimony, In the uprightnesse of
 my heart did I it, and my consci-
 ence doth beare me witnesse.

Now of all the silences of con-
 science, that is heaviest which be-
 falls us in our spirituall combats
 and trials; wherein our gracious

con-

condition is questioned, but cannot be issued, because conscience holds up, and doth not testify for us by any sensible approbation and acquittance, which is caused diversly

1 Sometimes through particular mis-behaviours against the directing voyce of conscience, these hold in the acquiting voyce of conscience, for conscience will not speake for us, if we presume to sin against it. Silence in conscience diversly caused.

2 Sometimes through disregard to the voyce of God in the Ministry; for Conscience takes not that well, which the Word takes ill: and therefore God doth usually make us know our neglects of his Word, by the silences of our consciences: And assuredly something is ordinarily amiss, when Conscience speaks unto us neither good nor bad.

3 Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us look higher then conscience, and that wee might know there is a higher Court to which wee must make our addresses.

4. Some

4 Sometimes Conscience is silent, to make us see upon what bottomes our faith is grounded, whether we can beleefe, because God saith, as well as rejoyce, because Conscience speaketh.

3 But to make Conscience speak, what must we doe? We have had its gracious testimonies, by which we have been much comforted and supported: How shall we recover it to speech againe?

I answer;

The waies
to recover
conscience
to speech
again.

1 Speak to God, and then God may speak to Conscience, & Conscience will speake to thee. God hath a greater command over Conscience, then it hath over us: It is with God and Conscience, as with a King and his Courtiers, let the King speake kindly to a Petitioner, the Courtiers will then imbrace him lovingly; and indeed Conscience will carry Gods face, and expresse his dispositions of love: Therefore this doe, speak to the Lord, 1. To shew thee the cause of Consciences silence. 2. To give

give thee the testimony of his own Spirit, which will draw with it againe the testimony of thine own conscience, *Rom. 8, 16.*

2 Speak to duty : Be sure thou doe not displease Conscience : If thou hast, repent, and adde no more to make Conscience displeased, or silent.

4 But how may we support our selves in the times of silence ?

Answer, thou mayst comfort thy selfe, if

1 The VVord can approve thee ; the testimony of the Word is ever open, though that of Conscience be not : what is the reason ? Because men may have a constant audience and triall of their estates. And take one thing by the way, If the Word (which is alwayes open and speaking) if it acquits thee, Conscience (though now silent, whensoever it speakes) will cleare thee.

2 Thou hast and dost approve the VVord : How is that ? That is, If the VVord bee thy rule, thy light,

light, by which thou hast & dost walk; for when Conscience comes to speak, it gives its sentence from the VVord (by which thou walkest,) and of thy frame and course which thou preservest in an upright answerableness to the directions of the VVord.

*An Addition of foure other causes of
Doubtings, with a briefe re-
solution of them.*

SENCE of sinfull workings. O! wretched a distressed soule, Certainly my condition is starke naught, and I have no right to Christ, nor to any mercy, I may not beleeeve: VVhy? Because I never found such vile workings of heart as of late: I feele a wonderfull rebellion in my heart; I cannot thinke on any good, nor set upon any good, but an army of evill is in me, opposing and hindering me.

Sol. To a soule in such a condition, I would

would (for his help) prescribe these five subsequent Considerations.

1 VVhen grace comes in truth, it is ever of that power to make such discoveries, and to raise such stirs, as the soule never felt before; for Grace is a new nature, and a new light, and a new active principle. It is put into the soule for that very end, to finde and lay out sin, yea and to expell and thrust it out. The judgement was never so conuinged before, nor Conscience so qualified before, nor the will and affections so spiritualized before; therefore never marvell at the strange workings. VVhen a child is conceived in the wombe, it is not now with the woman as in former times; and whensoever Christ is formed in the soule, it is not with that soul as in old times. There is that now false in, which must purge thee, and rule thee.

2 If good be wrought, evil wil work and oppose it. When Christ was born, all *Jerusalem* was troubled;

bled ; so when grace is wrought, sin will stir. Indeed if grace came into the soule either by a finall and totall cessation of sinne, that there were no sin residing in the soule, into the which grace comes, then thou shouldst feele no stir at all: Thus it shall be in Heaven; Grace there shall be alone; Holinesse, and nothing but holinesse there, and therefore no combat, no stir: But thus it never will be on earth: Sinne may be alone in some mens hearts, but grace is never alone in any mans heart in this life. Or if grace came into the soule by a peaceable resignation, if sinfull flesh would without any more adoe make a full and free surrender, and give it possession without any dispute and cavill, then also thou mightest expect a calmnesse, and a cessation of arms, no vile stirrings. But O Christian, Grace and sin, *The Spirit and the flesh are contrary one to the other*, and therefore they *lust* one against the other. Fire and water will not lye quiet.

Gal. 5. 17

quiet. Sad indeed were thy condition, if thou hadst such a frame of (vaine) good, against which no sinfull part in thee would oppose.

Every regenerate man hath a double man in him, the new man, and the old man; that would do good, this would not doe good; that would pray, this would not; that would mourne, this would not; that would beleewe, this would not.

3. But then thir^dly, thou who seelest such a rebelling and opposing flesh in thee, what is that which thou dost oppose? It is true, thou seelest an untoward, rebellious nature yet within thee, but what side takest thou? *It is not I*, said Paul, *but sin that dwelleth in me.* Sin in him opposed good, but Paul himselfe approved good, and delighted in good, and willed good.

The same Apostle speaking of the co-habitation, and the co-operation of flesh and spirit in regenerate persons, that the one did

did lust against the other, and the one was contrary to the other, and that by reason of the rebellion and unrulinesse of the one, wee

Gal. 5. 17. could not doe the good which we would; he yet comforteth them in such a condition in the next words, If

Verf. 18. yee bee led by the Spirit, yee are not under the Law. As if he had said, notwithstanding all this rebellious opposition of your flesh, if yet yee yeeld not to bee servants to it, but approve of, and incline unto, and follow in your hearts, and courses the rules of the Spirit, the condition is very good and safe.

So that though the evil remaining in us doth oppose the good in us, yet if we our selves oppose not the good, our condition may be good.

Fourthly, as there is evil in thee, opposing of thee in any good, so there is something in thee also opposing of that evil. Dost thou not condemne that hardnesse which hinders thee from

from mourning, and sheddest many a teare because thou canst not mourne? Dost thou not strive with the Lord by many prayers, and in the use of all his Ordinances against that unbeleeving and rebelliously working nature of thine? Dost thou not with *Paul*, conflict with it, groan under it, cry out, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?*

And surely neither the sense of this, nor the resistance of this, nor fervent desires of deliverance from this, can be any evill signes of thy condition.

Lastly, in the sense of inward rebellions and workings, thy way is not to nourish doubting, but thy duty is to stir up beleeving.

When *Paul* felt that agony twixt the law of his members, and the law of his minde, indeed he was much troubled at it, but yet he did not conclude against his condition in grace; No, but he acquits that (*Rom. 7.25.* So then with the minde I my self serve the Law
of

of God, though with the flesh the law of sin) and sets his faith to work, vers. 24. *Who shall deliver me?* v. 25. *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Marke his practise: This is my condition, I feel rebellious lusts, yea I feel them sometimes captivating of mee, what course shall I now take to be delivered of them? to vanquish them? I conflict with them, but I cannot conquer them: I cannot conquer them, yea but Jesus Christ can conquer them, and deliver me from them, and to him will I goe by faith.

Thus must thou doe in the sense of that native rebellion and vile operation of thy flesh; Thou must by faith goe unto Christ, thou must acknowledge thy vilenesse, and thy insufficiency, and also his Sufficiency: Thou must exalt Jesus Christ by faith in his Mediatorship, and trust on him, that he will by his Almighty Spirit crucifie thy sinfull flesh more, and (which was one end of his coming into the world) destroy those works

works of sin and Satan.

2 Another cause of doubting in a Christian, may be the sense of wrath. O! saith such a one, would you have me to beleeve, or imagine you that I can doe so, I who feel the very wrath of God in my soule, and the terrours of the Almighty wounding me for my transgressions? What, can, or may I beleeve mercy for me, who now feel wrath upon mee? can I beleeve that God will bee mercisfull, whom I sensibly apprehend to be wrathful?

This is a notable case, and needs a wary and circumspect resolution: Neverthelesse I shall at least endeavour to ungirt this burden for a troubled soule.

1 There are two sorts of persons who in this life may feel the wrath of God.

First, such as are unquestionably wicked; of whom some of them feel the wrath of God, as the beginning of their everlasting perdition: That wrath inflicted
on

on them is but the beginning of a just hell due unto them. Thus *Judas* felt the wrath of God: And some of them feel the wrath of God as a means for their humiliation and conversion. Thus they in *Acts* 2. 37. who were pricked in their hearts, and thereupon cryed out, *What shall we do?* felt the wrath of God.

Secondly, such as are unquestionably good; of whom some have felt Gods wrath in case of desertion, as *Heman*, *Ezra*, *Job*, and others, and some in case of notorious corruption, or sinning, as *David*, whose bones were broken, for it, and Gods face hid from him for it, and his moisture turned into the drought of summer.

2. Againe, you must distinguish of those effects which appeare in persons under the sense of divine wrath, for they are twofold.

1. Some feel the wrath of God, and are either onely intraged against God with blasphemies, or intraging their hearts the more to
goc

goe on in sinning against God, thinking at least by the pleasure of sinne to drowne the sense of wrath, or running into absolute despaire of Gods mercy; and therefore never attempting any course of repentance, because they give up all hope of mercy. Where there is such a sense of wrath as this, in all respects, and for ever, the condition is very fearfull,

2 Some feel the wrath of God, and are hereupon (occasionally) induced either to the study and care of a holy reformation of their sinfull hearts and wayes, or to a particular restoration of themselves from grosse sins into which they are fallen, and for which now they feelee the sore displeasure of an angry Father.

If thy condition be either of these, that thou feelest wrath, and that hath driven thee to a search of thy naturall estate, and to the discovery of it, and to an humbling for it, and to all the meanes

P

by

by which thou mayest be delivered as well (and rather) from thy sinfulness, as from Gods wrath; or if this wrath felt awakens thy conscience, and hath been a means to scourge thee out of some particular sinning, to thy former and better walkings with God, thou mayest now safely believe on mercy; yea though thou as yet feelest wrath, yet mayest thou believe mercy: And my reason is this, because now mercy is thy portion, thy condition now is right under many promises of mercy to pardon thee, for it is a truly penitential condition. See *Esa. 55.7. Ezek. 18. 21, 22. Hos. 14. 1, 2, 4.*

3 Though mercy be thy portion, yet know thou, that the sense of wrath will not off, untill thou dost believe actually on that mercy. It is not mercy in the Promise which alone can remove the sense of wrath, but it must be mercy applied by faith; for till faith works in the soule of a man,
till

ill the poore soule looks on God through the Perspective of faith, God appears not as a mercifull, but as a wrathfull God to it.

And therefore thou being in such a condition as I have delivered, thou mayest safely venture on mercy, though thou feelest wrath (the fore-named Saints did so) and upon beleeving thou shalt in due time feele the sense of mercy to take off the sense of wrath: Thy faith will see a reconciled God, and then thou shalt enjoy a pacified conscience.

3 A third cause of doubting, may be a condemning conscience. But saith the trembling Christian, My conscience tels me of my sinnings, and of wonderfull sinfulness within me; and God is greater then my conscience who will assuredly condemne me; O I may not beleeve.

This seems to be a knotty case, Whether a person may beleeve Gods absolving of him, though

Sol.

Conscience in him bee condemning? I will deliver my opinion thus:

First, you must distinguish of a condemning conscience: Conscience may either condemne;

1. A mans actions; Or,

2. His person.

1. A mans actions are condemned by Conscience, when Conscience being rightly enlightened and informed by the Word of God, pronounceth of them that they are evil, and damnable, that they are contrary to Gods holinesse and glory, and therefore are to be abhorred, and crucified, and forsaken.

2. A mans person is condemned by Conscience, not onely when Conscience findes finnes in the person, but likewise the person in finnes, (i.e.) not onely such corruptions in the heart, but also the heart approving, and loving of them, and resolved to keep them, and goe on in them.

Now observe me in two Conclusions

clussions answerable to these two Propositions :

1 If Conscience condemns thy person, I confesse thou hast no reason to beleewe mercy for thy selfe : If thy Conscience tells thee to the face of God, thou art in a foule sinfull course, and hast been called upon by the voice of the Word, and its voice, to come out of it, and thou dost not leave it; nay, art resolved to pursue it, and so insist on it, now God is greater then thy conscience, and will assuredly condemne thee.

2 If Conscience condemnes thy actions onely, then thou mayest, notwithstanding that condemnation, beleewe on mercy. My meaning is this; Though the Conscience by its discerning light, represents unto thee much sinfulness in thy nature and former course, and though it doth condemne these to bee vile, and most fit to be crucified, abhorred, and forsaken, this condemnation hinders not the right

of beleeving : Nay, no man indeed should beleeve, unlesse his conscience doth condemne sinne in him ; not onely shew him his sinnes, but assure him that they are evill, and unworthy his love; nay most worthy of his detestation and mortification.

Secondly, you must distinguish of times, when conscience doth condemne a man ; there are two times of a Christian.

1. Some are open and free; Hee is himselfe, and besides that, hee heares both parties, as well what is for himselfe, as what is against himselfe ; yea and weighs matters in controversie in the right ballance of Gods Sanctuary, not in Satans ballance of cunning suggestions. Will conscience condemne thy person at such a time, and under such circumstances ? Nay, will not the word of God acquit thee at such a time against all feares, for the substance and reality of a pious condition ?

2. Some are clouded and darkened,

ned, either with melancholy, or afflictions, or temptations, wherein the Christian seeth his face through a false glasse, (just as a Title is made by a deceitfull and cunning Lawyer) not according to truth, not all of it, but some of it: What is past heretofore for action and affection, or what hath falne out, not in the course of life since a mans conversion, but onely in case of surprisall and captivity. Now perhaps conscience may condemne thee, but this is an illegall sentence, it is a corrupted judgement, and is reversible; God will not judge of thee, as Conscience in such a case doth; Nay he wil repeale it, and disannull it.

4 A fourth cause of doubtings is, a feare lest a man hath sinned that great sinne against the Holy Ghost: And the maine inducement to credit this, is, a sinning against cleare knowledge, which is one ingredient in that sinne, Now this is my condition, saith a
P 4 troubled

troubled soule, I have not onely sinned, but sinned against light shining in the Ministry, and working on my conscience; therefore I may rather conclude then question it, Mercy belongs not to me.

Sol. To helpe a conscience thus intrahled, I would wish that such a person would first be informed; Secondly, be directed.

I The information which I would commend in this case, is fourefold.

First, that the sinne against the Holy Ghost, is not any sinne which a man commits through ignorance: Whatsoever the sinne or sinnes have bene, (whereof the party stands guilty) whether against the Law, or against the Gospel; suppose it be one, or many hainous sinnes, yet if the person be in a state of blindness and ignorance, if there is a nescience of the fact; if he knowes not what he doth, this ignorance privileged the sinnings thus far, that

that therefore they are not the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not any sin against the Gospel, which is elicited and acted through a mis-beliefe or misperswasion: If the sin be a sleighting of Evangelicall doctrines, nay a persecuting of them, and of the professors of them, yet if these acts of opposition depend totally on error in the judgement, on a judgement misperswaded (i.e.) rather believing them not to be truths, rather thinking those wayes to be false wayes; I say this mis-beliefe preserves such sinnings yet from being sins against the Holy Ghost, because the sinne against the Holy Ghost supposeth light even to conviction and approbation. See *1 Tim. 1.13*
Heb. 6. 4, 5.

Thirdly, the sinne against the Holy Ghost is not every finning against knowledge. These are not reciprocall propositions, every sinne against the Holy Ghost is
against

against knowledge, and every sin against knowledge is the sin against the Holy Ghost. The former is true, but the latter is not; for many a converted man sinneth against knowledge, who yet never sinneth the sin against the Holy Ghost.

In two cases a man sinning against knowledge, doth not yet sin that sin against the Holy Ghost: One is, the case of a strong and violent temptation: Another is, the case of a sudden & turbulent passion: It is the same with *Peters* case against his knowledge denying and forswearing his Master. If *Paul* before his conversion had had *Peters* knowledge, he had sinned this sinne against the Holy Ghost; And if *Peter* in his deniall had had *Pauls* malice joyned with his knowledge, hee had also sinned that sinne: but the mis-beliefe of the one before his conversion, and the infirmity of the other after it, preserved from this sin. Er-
rour

four mis-led the one, and sudden feare surprised the other.

Fourthly, there are three horrible finnings which doe attend that sin against the holy Ghost; and the Scripture (which wee were best exceeding warily to follow in resolving this case) expressly delivers them.

1 One is, totall Apostasie from the truths of Jesus Christ knowne and tasted. The truths of Christ must 1. be known and apprehended, 2. known and tasted, they must be approved. 3. And then the person falls from these. 4. Nay his fall is not particular, (which is incident to the best) it is a totall fall, not a falling in the way, but a falling from the way of truth, *Heb. 6. 4. If they were once enlightened and tasted, &c. If, ver. 6. they shall fall away.*

2 A second is, a malicious opposition of that truth which was once known and tasted, and from which now the person is false, called *Heb. 6. 6. A crucifying of*
of

And despising the spirit of Grace.

of the Sonne of God afresh; And Heb. 10. 26. *A wilfull sinner*, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth. And it was evident in the Pharisees, who saw and knew the light, but hated, and persecuted it unto the death.

3 A third is, finall impenitencie. Whosoever sins the sin against the holy Ghost, he neither doth repent, nor can repent: He is so justly and for ever forsaken of God, and given up to a reprobate sense, and a seared Conscience, that hee cannot repent; though (perhaps) he may see his course to be evill, yet it is impossible (saith the Apostle in Heb. 6. 6.) to renew him to repentance.

FINIS.

